# SIGHT The Film Quarterly AND SOUND



# Special Hollywood Number

REPORT ON NEW DIMENSIONS

THE HOLLYWOOD SCENE

SCIENCE FICTION

STROHEIM REVISITED

THE STAR SYSTEM



LIAM REDMOND in ANDRE MORELL in HIGH TREASON (G.F.D. Release)

MARY MORRIS

1 hr. 33 mins.



ALEC GUINNESS STANLEY HOLLOWAY in THE LAVENDER HILL MOB
"U" Cert. (G.F.D. Release) 1 hr. 20 mins.



Alexander Korda presents
CONRAD VEIDT
SABU
JUNE DUPREZ
JOHN JUSTIN in
THE THIEF OF BAGDAD
Colour By Technicolor
"U" Cert.

Alexander Korda presents
SABU
JOHN JUSTIN in
THE THIEF OF BAGDAD
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This list has been compiled for us by the staff of SIGHT AND SOUND and

we hope it may serve as a useful general guide to the principal films now in British cinemas.

ANDROCLES AND THE LION (R.K.O.). A minor Shaw comedy, over-dressed with extravagant lack of taste in a Pascal production, but partially redeemed by most of the acting and a respect for the text. (Victor Mature, Jean Simmons, Robert Newton, Maurice Evans; director, Chester Erskine.)

APRIL IN PARIS (Warners). Undistinguished but not disagreeable musical about attempt to groom a chorus girl as delegate to an Arts' Festival. (Doris Day, Ray Bolger; director, David Butler).

<sup>o</sup>BAD AND THE BEAUTIFUL, THE (M.G.M.). Though it pulls some punches, this account of Hollywood goings-on entertains highly with its brilliant direction and acting. (Kirk Douglas, Lana Turner, Dick Powell, Gloria Grahame; director Vincente Minnelli.)

BATTLE CIRCUS (M.G.M.). Tribute to U.S. army medical services in Korea; a conventional, glib and superficial war film. (Humphrey Bogart, June Allyson; director, Richard Brooks.)

BWANA DEVIL (United Artists). Jungle jinks in "Natural Vision": the first stereoscopic feature film, made with a fascinating lack of talent. (Barbara Britton, Robert Stack; director, Arch Oboler.)

\*\*COME BACK, LITTLE SHEBA (Paramount). Literal, sensitive translation of quite interesting Broadway domestic drama, mainly notable for a superb performance by Shirley Booth. (Burt Lancaster, Terry Moore; director, Daniel Mann.)

COSH BOY (Independent). The rise and fall of a cosh boy; assumed moral indignation and sensation-mongering make, as usual, an unattractive couple. (James Kenney, Joan Collins, Hermione Baddeley; director, Lewis Gilbert.)

**DESPERATE MOMENT** (G.F.D.). Sobstuff and thickear in darkest Berlin; hero on the run, heroine desperate. (Dirk Bogarde, Mai Zetterling, Philip Friend; director, Compton Bennett.)

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN (R.K.O.). Goldwyn's big, slow, sugary, non-biographical study of Hans Andersen and his alleged love for pretty, married ballerina. (Danny Kaye, Renée Jeanmaire; director, Charles Vidor.)

"I DON'T CARE "GIRL, THE (Fox). Biography of vaudeville star Eva Tanguay; quite unremarkable musical. (Mitzi Gaynor, David Wayne, Oscar Levant; director Lloyd Bacon.)

°JEUX INTERDITS (International). Striking French film about two children who invent their own games of death; intelligently, grippingly, if coldly treated. (Brigitte Fossey, Georges Poujouly; director, René Clement.)

LITTLE WORLD OF DON CAMILLO, THE (London Films). Rivalries of parish priest and Communist mayor in Italian village: good-humoured, well acted, superficial Franco-Italian film. (Fernandel, Gino Cervi; director, Julien Duvivier.)

MEMBER OF THE WEDDING, THE (Columbia). Carson McCullers' delicate study of an adolescent in the South loses most of its charm and subtlety in a disappointing transcription. (Julie Harris, Ethel Waters, Brandon de Wilde; director, Fred Zinnemann.)

METROSCOPIX (M.G.M.). Revival of 18 year-old analyph stereoscopic shorts; mostly, a series of heavy objects propelled vividly, viciously and nervewrackingly at the audience.

MILITARY POLICEMEN (Paramount). Bob Hope as boxing manager turned soldier; sub-standard comedy. (Mickey Rooney, Marilyn Maxwell; director, George Marshall.)

MIRACLE OF FATIMA, THE (Warners). Pious but ineffectual record of religious experiences of three Portuguese children in 1917; typical Hollywood sentiment and incongruity of setting. (Gilbert Roland, Angela Clarke, Susan Whitney; director, John Brahm.)

MOUSSORGSKY (Continental Concorde). Long, rather pedagogic biography of famous composer, done with the usual anonymous competence of so many contemporary Soviet films. (Alexandre Borisov, Nicolas Tcherkassov; director, Grigori Roshal.)

NAKED SPUR, THE (M.G.M.). Three men capture an outlaw, are rivals for the reward money; good scenery, much violence, average presentation (James Stewart, Robert Ryan; director, Anthony Mann.)

NEVER LET ME GO (M.G.M.). Clark Gable, American newshound, smuggling his war bride, Russian ballerina, out of a Baltic port: thrills, politics and Swan Lake. (Gene Tierney; director, Delmer Daves).

NIAGARA (Fox). Rather gloomy murder story featuring Niagara and Marilyn Monroe in about equal proportions; strictly for her fans. (Joseph Cotten, Jean Peters; director, Henry Hathaway.)

ONE SUMMER OF HAPPINESS (G.C.T.). Swedish film with apparently inevitable ingredients of unhappy young lovers, difficult peasants, religious maniaes and lovely photography. (Folke Sundquist, Ulla Jacobsson; director, Arne Mattson.)

**PETER PAN** (R.K.O.). Disney's version. Chiefly remarkable for the extraordinary metamorphosis of Tinker Bell. Otherwise, some engaging moments.

<sup>©</sup>PLAISIR, LE (*Columbia*). Three Maupassant stories elegantly mounted by Max Ophuls; at times over-elaborate, but full of characteristic invention and with some good acting. (Jean Gabin, Danielle Darrieux, Daniel Gélin, Simone Simon.)

QUO VADIS (M.G.M.). A long Lay of Ancient Rome: big and beastly. (Robert Taylor, Deborah Kerr; director, Mervyn LeRoy.)

ROUGH SHOOT (United Artists). Spies in Dorset. Anglo-American attempt to do a Hitchcock style thriller. One or two picturesque minor characters but a lack of dramatic invention. (Joel McCrea, Evelyn Keyes, Herbert Lom; director, Robert Parrish.)

SEVEN DEADLY SINS, THE (International). One sketch dramatising each of them; long and mainly deadly Franco-Italian production, with one interesting episode by Autant-Lara. (Gérard Philippe, Michéle Morgan, Francoise Rosay, Noel-Noel, etc. directors, Rossellini, Yves Allegret, Carlo Rim, etc.)

STARS ARE SINGING, THE (Paramount). Commonplace musical with Iron Curtain trimmings, introducing bright new singer Rosemary Clooney. (Anna Maria Alberghetti, Lauritz Melchior; director, Norman Taurog.)

STORY OF THREE LOVES (M.G.M.). Technicolor package film of three short stories variously treating love; lush, pretentious, expensive looking, literate but disappointingly heavy-handed. (Kirk Douglas, Pier Angeli, James Mason, Moira Shearer, etc.; directors, Gottfried Reinhardt and Vincente Minnelli.)

STREET CORNER (G.F.D.). Les Policegirls; rescuing babies, rounding up shop-lifters and gangsters and raiding night clubs, all in the day's work. Rather splendid. (Peggy Cummins, Anne Crawford, Rosamund John; director, Muriel Box.).

TAXI (Fox). Irish girl comes to New York to look for missing husband, instead meets taxi driver Dan Dailey. Slight, sentimental romance. (Constance Smith; director, Gregory Ratoff.)

THREE FORBIDDEN STORIES (Regent). Three more stories, about unhappy Italian girls; drugs, sadism, rape, etc., all given the full treatment, with X marking almost every spot. (Eleanora Rossi Drago, Lia Amanda, Antonella Lualdi; director, Augusto Genina.)

TITFIELD THUNDERBOLT, THE (G.F.D.). Mild Ealing Studios comedy about a village that runs its own railway line. Some good moments. (George Relph, John Gregson, Godfrey Tearle; director, Charles Crichton.)

TONIGHT WE SING (Fox). Large scale biography of impresario Sol Hurok, impersonations of Chaliapin, Pavlova, etc. in Technicolor. Occasionally high-toned; generally undistinguished. (David Wayne, Ezio Pinza, Tamara Toumanova; director, Mitchell Leisen.)

TREASURE OF THE GOLDEN CONDOR, THE (Fox). 18th century treasure hunting in Guatemala, with interludes in France; impressive landscapes, not very much else. (Cornel Wilde, Constance Smith: director Delmer Daves.)

YELLOW BALLOON, THE (A.B.-Pathé). Modest British thriller somewhat modelled on *The Window*; not very original, but well made and occasionally exciting. (Andrew Ray, Kenneth More, Kathleen Ryan; director, J. Lee-Thompson.)

Those marked with an asterisk are especially recommended.



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# SIGHT AND SOUND

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### In The Picture

The Monsoon Case

DUNCAN CROW writes: On February 18th an important judgment affecting the film industry was delivered when Mr. Justice Vaisey dismissed a summons brought by F.G. (Films)
Ltd. against the Board of Trade. This summons had arrived
out of the refusal of the Board to register Monsoon as a British film, on the grounds that it was made, not by F.G. (Films) Ltd., but by an American company called Film Group Incorporated. The applicants, on the other hand, contended that they were the makers of the film within the meaning of the Films Act, and that furthermore they were, and always had been, a British company. Hence, they claimed, Monsoon should have been registered as a British, and not as a foreign

The Films Act lays down the three conditions which must be fulfilled before a film can be deemed to be British. These conditions are:

that "(a) the maker of the film was, throughout the time during which the film was being made, either a British subject or a British company and

(b) the studio, if any, used in making the film was within His Majesty's dominions, and

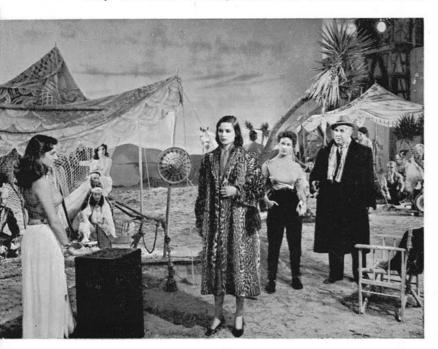
(c) not less than the requisite amount of labour costs represents payments paid or payable in respect of the labour or services of British subjects or persons domiciled in some part of His Majesty's dominions."

Of these conditions the Board of Trade admitted that (b) and (c) had been fulfilled. It also granted that F.G. (Films) Ltd. was a British company, having been incorporated in England on May 29th, 1951 with a capital of £100, and having a majority of its three directors British subjects. The third director, Mr. Forrest Judd, was an American citizen. What the board did not admit, however, was that F.G. (Films) Ltd. were the makers of Monsoon.

The background of the film, on which this denial was based, was that in May, 1951, F.G. (Films) Ltd. agreed to produce Monsoon, while Film Group Inc. agreed to provide the necessary finance and such other facilities as were required. The

story rights were also the property of the American company.

Now section 44 of the Films Act says that the maker of a film is the person (or persons) "by whom the arrangements necessary for making the film are undertaken", and in this context the word "undertake" was considered by Mr. Justice Vaisey to mean "be responsible for especially in the financial sense, but also generally." To be successful in their contention that Monsoon was a British film, F.G. (Films) Ltd. had to establish themselves as its sole makers, because if they were only the makers in co-operation with others, that is to say





Elia Kazan's new film, "The Man on the Tightrope", about a circus troupe in Germany, filmed on location there, and scripted by Robert Sherwood. Above, Terry Moore and Fredric March.

with Film Group Inc., these others could certainly not be deemed "either a British subject or a British company."

Reviewing the facts of the case, Mr. Justice Vaisey did not believe that F.G. (Films) Ltd. had undertaken "in any real sense of that word, the arrangements for the making of the film." The company had acted, "in so far as it acted at all in the matter, merely as the nominees of and agents for . . . Film Group Incorporated, which seemed (among other things) to have financed the making of the film to the extent of at least £80,000 under the auspices and direction of Mr. Forrest Judd, who happened to be its president. . . . The applicants intervention in the matter was, indeed, purely colourable. They were brought into existence for the sole purpose of being put forward as having undertaken the very elaborate arrangements necessary for the making of the film and of enabling it thereby to qualify as a British film. The attempt had failed and the Board of Trade's decision not to register Monsoon (The Times, as a British film was, in his judgment, right." February 19th.)

Although it would be invidious to attempt any detailed prognostication from this "test case", there can be no doubt of its importance. Anglo-American productions which qualify as British films are a common feature of today, and while in the great majority of cases the intervention of the British element is not "purely colourable", yet if "maker" means "sole maker", then it would seem that any American (or, for that matter, any other foreign) responsibility for "the arrangements necessary for the making of the film" would at once disqualify that production from registration as a British film. As Mr. Justice Vaisey himself pointed out, the defini-tion of "maker" in the Films Act is "perhaps a strange collocation of words, which might in other circumstances give rise to some difficulty of interpretation." It will be interesting to see how soon those other circumstances arise.

Festivals in London

The French Film Festival, held at the Rialto cinema for a week in mid-February, was marked by skilled public rela-tions and smoothness of organisation not always the rule on such occasions. The gala performance of Belles-de-Nuit for the Queen, an agreeable reception at the Institut Français, the presence of René Clair, Jacques Becker, René Clement, Jean Delannoy and Max Ophuls, and of a much-photographed contingent of stars led by Simone Signoret, Gerard Philipe and Madeleine Robinson, ensured the Festival's success as a social occasion. But the elegant trappings did not conceal the A film studio scene from Antonioni's "La Signora senza Camelie", dramatic comedy of a shopgirl (Lucia Bose) who becomes a star.



Another scene from "The Man on the Tightrope". Members of the circus troupe: centre, Gloria Grahame.

fact that the films themselves fell some way short of the highest standards. Clair's Belles-de-Nuit stood out for its undoubted wit and gaiety, and Jean Delannoy's La Minute de Verité, the study of a crisis in the relations of a doctor and his wife, had interest, but Christian-Jaque's Barbe-Bleue and Fanfan-la-Tulipe, the Fernandel comedy-drama La Table aux Crevés and Duvivier's popular hit Don Camillo were in no way outstanding. The Festival, though, presented a fair picture of the current situation in France, where, as in this country, the output of the most noteworthy directors has

slackened in the last few years.

A week or so later, the British Soviet Friendship Society put on a Soviet Festival at the Scala theatre. Here, though the atmosphere was unmistakably high-minded, artistic achievement was still more elusive. The Daily Worker announced "a unique opportunity for British people to share the warm values of peace, friendship and human understanding which pervade Soviet life"; the films shown only served to confirm previous impressions of the generally depressing nature of contemporary Russian film-making. Most human and attractive were Gerasimov's Country Doctor, about the struggles of a young woman doctor, and the children's feature In the Steppes. Pattern for Life, concerning young engineers in Leningrad, Donets Miners, about the invention of new mining apparatus, and We are for Peace, a documentary record of the 1951 Berlin Youth Festival, with much marching to and fro, were uninspired propaganda stuff. Other features were Bountiful Summer, a collective farm comedy of the usual bouncing type, and Broken Fetters, a dignified but heavygoing biography of Shevchenko, the Ukrainian poet. The Manchester Guardian commented that, "Only one personal problem was revealed in all these films; the conflict between man's desires and his duty as a worker to society. Pride, selfishness, self-interest, mental sloth, conservatism, these were the devils shown tempting Soviet man. With the help of society, however, he was able to cast them out."

### Italian Notes

ROBERT HAWKINS writes: The potentially dangerous rush to a quantitative production has pushed Italy's feature film total for 1952 up to 132, a new high, giving this country a second place ranking in world film production. But though considerable improvement is noticeable in the average product, there has been no corresponding rise in the number of top

Jean Marais and Fernando Gomez in G. W. Pabst's new film, set in a monastery, "The House of Silence": filmed in Italy, from a story by Zavattini.

quality films. Commercialism has almost inevitably but discouragingly replaced much that once was inventiveness and experimentation. Even some of the top names have surrendered—they say—temporarily. Meanwhile, history is repeating itself in certain local trends. Cabiria, Cleopatra, Attila the Hun, Theodora, Queen of Byzanthium, and other fought-over titles for current projects, speak for themselves.

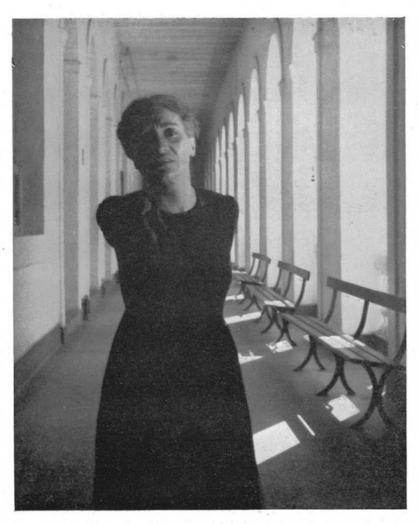
fought-over titles for current projects, speak for themselves. The quality potential, as customary, is in the hands of a relative few. Zavattini has several projects going. He is writing Lo Schiaffo (The Slap) for comedian Rascel, recently in The Overcoat, and Prima Io (Me First), a "strong comedy", which Blasetti will direct this fall. Another Zavattini plan, in the nature of a series of reportages, L'Amore in Citta (Love in the City), may be filmed on a twice-yearly basis by such men as Lattuada, Antonioni, Emmer, Dino Risi, and Carlo Lizzani (with the exception of Lattuada, all ex-documentarists). The long-planned Italia Mia, an episodic survey of the current Italian scene once intended for DeSica, then taken up by Rossellini, may now be shot, according to Zavattini, by "three young Italian directors," as yet unnamed.

The surprising commercial success of his *Il Cappotto* (*The Overcoat*), has granted Alberto Lattuada a reprieve from further concessions, enabling him to shoot a story of his own choice, *La Lupa* (*The She-Wolf*) from the book by the Sicilian realist Giovanni Verga. Kerima is interestingly co-starred with a promising Swedish import named May Britt. *La Lupa* was made in Matera, in the deep south of Italy. Also at work in the south: Rossellini, busy in Naples on a still-mysterious story of his own, titled *Voyage to Italy*, and co-starring Ingrid Bergman and George Sanders. Naples is likewise the location site for Giuseppe DeSantis' latest, *Un Marito per Anna Zaccheo* (*A Husband for Anna Zaccheo*), with Massimo Girotti and Silvana Pampanini.

While awaiting a decision on his Nostri Figli (Our Sons), a study of adolescents in three different countries, of which the French episode has been held up by official government intervention. Michelangelo Antonioni has completed La Signora Senza Camelie. Lucia Bose plays the shopgirl who rises to film stardom, against an industry background seen with critical eye.

Other interesting projects include Visconti's Senso, from the Boito story, promised for spring production; a G. W. Pabst version of Homer's Odyssey, with Silvana Mangano; and Castellani's Romeo and Juliet. After more than a year's preparation, Castellani is about to start the Rank-Universal-cine production, shooting on locations in Verona, Venice, and Siena. Laurence Harvey will play Romeo; a discovery, 18-year-old Susan Shentall, plays Juliet. Flora Robson, Norman Wooland, James Robertson Justice, and others are scheduled to appear in the Technicolor film, which will be photographed by Robert Krasker.





The mother in Cavalcanti's "The Song of the Sea".

### Cavalcanti in Brazil

Three years ago Cavalcanti returned to his native Brazil to supervise, with Government cooperation, feature film production at the Sao Paulo studios. After a year, through disagreements with the financiers, the unit was disbanded. Later, Cavalcanti was commissioned to set up a National Institute of Cinema. He wrote about this in a letter published in our January 1952 number; now, he contributes a further instalment.

CAVALCANTI writes: The unit that worked, under my supervision, on the planning of the National Institute of Cinema, was disbanded when the final draft was delivered to President Getulio Vargas. He handed it to the Chamber of Deputies for approval. Now that the plan is likely to become a reality, our opponents as well as our friends have expressed interest. A cinema congress was held, numerous private interests expressed their views, and a decree was obtained by which, for every eight foreign films shown in the 2,150 cinemas in this country, one Brazilian production became obligatory. Innumerable reissues, discarded films and, above all, hastily contrived new productions were forced on the cinemas as a result. The decree has, unfortunately, proved contradictory to the ideas of the Institute, which aimed at improving quality, and once again favourable to producers.

While all this was happening I was at work on a book about film-making, called Film and Reality, due to be published shortly. During these weeks of retirement I told myself that any further collective action was pointless, that independent work was the only answer, for the majority of people invoived in films over here have only one aim—to let things remain as they are. The book completed, I accepted, mainly for financial reasons, to direct a comedy for the Maristela Company: The Adventures of One-Eyed Simon. The film has met with great box-office success, but it seems to me regrettable that, because

of its technical limitations, and its flimsy subject matter, it is unsuitable for showing abroad.

This comedy, and a documentary on the Government-owned steel industry, *Volta Redonda*, produced by me and directed by John Waterhouse, are the only films made by us in two years. A poor total when you think that Brazil is a country that needs films, and where experienced film technicians are rare.

While working at the Maristela studios near Sao Paulo, I was offered by friends, backed by aid from the Government, to organise a new company: Kino-Filmes S.A., and under their auspices to start a new film. This time it was imperative to choose firstly a subject with international appeal, and secondly, to make sure of adequate technical resources. I worked with a young Brazilian writer, José Mauro de Vasconcelos, and, for the dialogue, with a playwright, Hermilo Borba Filho, on a very free adaptation of the theme of one of my French silent films: En rade. The Portuguese title is O Canto do Mar. My unit was increased, notably by the documentary cameraman Cyril Arapoff, and we settled in Recife for the shooting script, pre-production conferences and tests.

The choice of Recife, capital of the state of Pernambuco, was determined by its pure national character; the third largest city in Brazil, it possesses also a great wealth of folklore associations. We aim, for the first time in this country, at a strictly regional production, with local actors and much exterior shooting.

The difficulties are enormous, and the greatest of them no doubt strange to the European mind: the scarcity of raw stock, and next to that, an extraordinary lack of co-operation in the hiring of equipment. Not surprisingly, shooting has gone slowly, but we hope that *The Song of the Sea* will justify our ambitions—and perhaps show, too, that the urge of a director to make a film in which he really believes is still, whatever the conditions, the vital factor.

### Von Sternberg Films the Anatahan Story

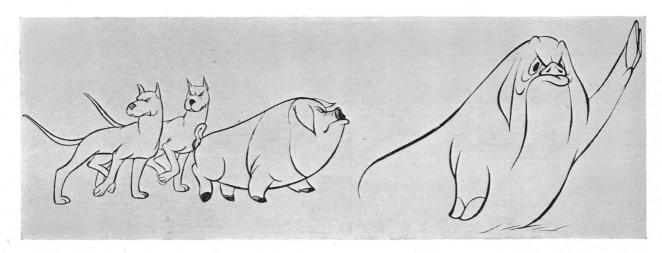
HERMAN G. WEINBERG writes: In a man-made jungle cluttered with electric cables and junction boxes, in the ancient Japanese capital of Kyoto, Josef von Sternberg is currently filming the celebrated Anatahan Story, a weird footnote to the last war. (See also page 178.) Far from Hollywood, the director of The Blue Angel, Morocco and Shanghai Express, among others, has converted a large industrial exhibition hall in Kyoto's Okazaki Park into a studio. Here a South Sea island jungle has been built, complete with ferns, palms, underbrush, thatched huts and a derelict boat. This will be Anatahan, a verdant dot among the Marianas in the South Pacific, where 30 Japanese men and a single woman held out for several years after Japan's surrender in the last war, refusing to believe in Japan's defeat, and putting up a vain resistance against American occupying forces. To make things that much tougher for themselves, the men fought over the lone woman and several were killed in these frequent skirmishes.

This item, reported in the N.Y. Times last year, inspired the film but, contrary to expectations, the von Sternberg version of the Anatahan incident will be completely independent of the actual occurrences on the island.

"The story as told by the survivors is a sordid one, and I am not interested in it," the director declared. "I am creating, instead, a sympathetic picture of those people." The film, which is being made for the international market, will be an "ambassador for Japan", according to von Sternberg.

an "ambassador for Japan", according to von Sternberg.
"We hope to open the eyes of the world to the great wealth
of art in Japan," he remarked. "What is known publicly about
the subject is not in my mind. In fact, I would have been
pleased if the subject was not known to the world." And,
indeed, when the real heroine of Anatahan was in Tokyo, the
director said he had little interest in meeting her, because he
was not going to produce Kazuko Hika's biographical
incidents, but an artistic film based on this episode.

For his screen heroine, the discoverer of Marlene Dietrich found a 19-year-old dancer, Akemi Negishi, an unbilled member of the Nichigeki Dancing Team. Interviewed during a recess in her act, Miss Negishi engagingly told reporters, "I don't understand why Mr. von Sternberg picked me for the part."



The first British full-length cartoon is "Animal Farm," made from George Orwell's famous political parable by Joy Halas and John Batchelor, produced by Louis de Rochemont. Here are two characters from this satire on totalitarianism telling of a farmyard revolution against Man, in which the pigs seize absolute power. Left, Napoleon, with two bodyguards, leader of the revolutionary pigs whose slogan is: " all animals are equal only some are more equal than others." Right: Major, another leading revolutionary.

Not a single shot will be filmed in the actual locale. There will not even be any process shots by which actual back-grounds are "grafted" on to the foreground action. The entire development of the story will be photographed in the improvised studio jungle set. According to von Sternberg, there is no need to shoot films in their actual locales contrary to much current Hollywood practice. Because, he states, film reality and actual reality are fundamentally different. "Shooting at the actual locale does not necessarily result in an artistic production. The artist's primary attitude is to understand the essence of the reality he seeks."

To the question of production cost, the director caustically replied, "What difference does it make how much it costs? Certainly it won't be more than it gets back."

Asked to comment on Japanese films, he said, "I did not come here as a teacher but as a student. It would be awkward, indeed, if I surrendered my rôle of movie director for that

of a movie critic."

The language problem is a formidable one. hundred Japanese working for me and it's not easy to keep them well informed and organised." For this reason, the director has devised two methods to overcome the language barrier: (1) a unique diagram showing all characters and their inter-relationships by way of colour lines in each sequence, and (2) a set of about 30 drawings to show each sequence pictorially.

Other innovations include the mounting of a Mitchell camera (the only American piece of equipment on the set) on a ten-foot high cylinder in the fashion of an X-ray camera, which can be moved up and down and clamped at any height. This is said to be far more desirable than the conventional tripod mounting, because it enables quicker changes of camera

levels.

The chief problem remains a language one, not a technical ne. The latter is easily enough mastered by a man who could re-create in California a North African desert outpost so well that the Pasha of Marrakech refused to believe that *Morocco* was not actually filmed there. Since few in the cast of Anatahan understand English, everything the American director says must be translated on the spot. Hence, invariably 10 or 15 seconds, if not more, elapses before an actor comes to a halt after von Sternberg shouts, "Hold it!" This can get very enervating after a while. "The language barrier is tremendous," sighs the director. "The strain is worse than physical—it's all mental."

Anatahan, as the film will probably be called, is an enterprise of Daiwa Productions, represented by Yoshio Osawa, a Kyoto financier and one-time president of the Toho Film Company, Nagamasa Kawakita, president of Towa Films Inc., and von Sternberg, who invests his services.

It is not von Sternberg's first visit to Japan. He was there some 16 years ago, during a world tour-promising his many admirers (his films are very popular there) that he would come back some day to make a film.

He is supremely confident of his first film in Japan. In a recent letter to the writer he said, "It is shaping up beautifully . . . I intend to set a standard of visual excellence with this picture." As an indication of what can be expected from the director who has already set standards of visual excellence in his past work, notably Docks of New York, Shanghai Express, The Scarlet Empress and The Devil is a Woman, it is most revealing that, in the above quoted passage from his letter, he crossed out the typed word "picture" and wrote "film." There is a difference. In that difference lies the history of the art of the motion pictures.

### Work in Progress

### Britain

Laurence Olivier: an adaptation of King Lear, in colour, with himself as Lear.

Alexander Mackendrick: The Puffers, a story of Scottish cargo boats, to be filmed mainly on location.

Anthony Asquith: A Man of Affairs, story of the early life of Samuel Pepys, scripted by John Creswell.

John Huston: a thriller, Beat the Devil, set in Italy, with

Bogart, Jennifer Jones, Peter Lorre, Robert Morley. Then a bullfighting film in Spain, Matador, with Jose Ferrer.

Group 3: Kigezi, a study of racial tensions between settled Africans and aboriginal Pygmies in Uganda. Filmed in colour, directed by Cyril Frankel, written by Montagu Slater, produced by John Grierson.

U.S.A.

Billy Wilder: Pal Joey, from the John O'Hara-Rodgers and Hart musical, with Marlon Brando, Mae West.

Fred Zinnemann: From Here to Eternity, from James Jones' study of G.I.s at a Pacific base, with Montgomery Clift, Burt Lancaster, Deborah Kerr, Frank Sinatra.

Charles Bennett: Hitchcock's scriptwriter in the 30's (Man Who Knew Too Much, etc.) is directing his first film, a thriller, No Escape, with Lew Ayres, Marjorie Steele.

Robert Bresson: Lancelot et les Chevaliers de la Table Ronde.

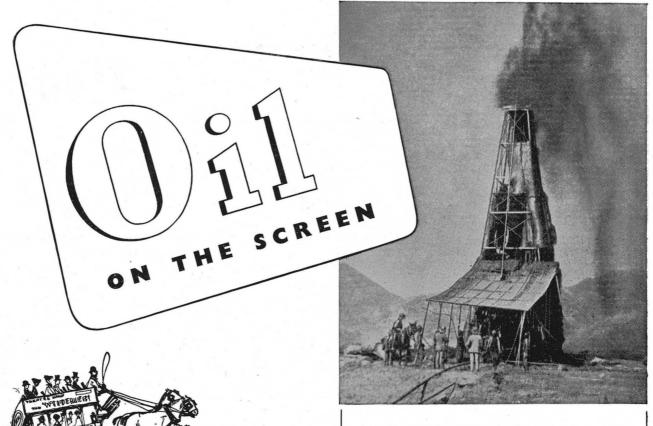
Max Ophuls: Madame de . . . , from Louise de Vilmorin's novel, with Vittorio de Sica and Danielle Darrieux.

Nicole Vedrès: a scientific documentary, Aspects de la Biologie, written by Jean Rostand.

### **Switzerland**

Leopold Lindtberg: The Village, story of the village of Pestalozzi, where children of many nations injured in the war are nursed back to health. English-speaking, with John Justin, Eva Dahlbeck.

Georges Rouquier: Sang et Lumières, from a novel by Joseph Peyré, with Daniel Gélin as a toreador.



A series of films,

sponsored by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, has been made to illustrate those chapters in the story of the Oil Industry which are of more popular interest.

All these films have been made to entertain as well as instruct and are already enjoying a wide distribution in many countries. They also include films of special interest to universities, schools, business and training colleges and scientific societies.

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Each is available in 16 mm. size. One of these films is described briefly here, and details of

the others in the series can be obtained from the Petroleum Films Bureau.\*





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# The

# Front

# Page

When it was originally planned to devote most of the pages of this number to various aspects of Hollywood, the news of 3D, big screens and so on had not placed the American film industry so firmly in the immediate limelight. It was, simply, that the time of the remake of *The Jazz Singer*, coinciding as it did with the sound cinema's first quarter century, seemed a good moment for looking at Hollywood, inspecting its

present, re-examining some of its past.

Now, of course, the future plays an important part. In its constant struggle to keep pace with the machine, Hollywood sometimes appears as a concentration point of modern society; from time to time something technologically explodes, and the result has to be explored and controlled. Hollywood, mainly through the genius of D. W. Griffith, pioneered the dramatic narrative of silent cinema; it pioneered sound, pioneered Technicolor; still produces more films than any other country or city, and in the mastery of what is loosely called entertainment has never surrendered its domination. Now, once again, it is investigating new resources of entertainment, perhaps of art.

Hollywood has produced scores of good films and hundreds of bad ones. The bad ones have made it, over the last thirty years, everybody's whipping-boy, while the good ones are usually assumed to have been unintentional or pushed through in the face of widespread opposition to superior quality. One is sometimes tempted to wonder whether, if all novels were written and published in one particular city, say, Luton, or Minneapolis—this distinguished literary medium might not fall, suddenly, into disrepute. The stock response to thousands of lurid paperbacks as well as a few serious works pouring out from a dozen neighbouring presses can easily be imagined: "How can you take the novel seriously? Just look at Luton (or Minneapolis), etc." Not that one absolves Hollywood from all the detracting charges; its excesses and its self-advertising complacencies have frequently been as gigantic as the abuse received. The scope on which it operates, the opportunities it has offered to picturesque adventures and impregnable hacks as well as to people of genuine talent, the enormous audience that its product reaches, has made it inevitable that "Hollywood" should exist as a term for so many things, that its stars should often appear to ordinary mortals like gods visiting the earth, that fact, rumour and hearsay should have created a complete mythological way of life.

Inflated as it is to maintain a constant stream of production, Hollywood is also bound to exhaust itself periodically. Wasteful of energy, it seems, like America itself, to have enormous reserves of it. The great majority of films that we see come from Hollywood, and consequently Hollywood is subject to more merciless scrutiny than any other film industry, except the native one. Thus its impoverished years—the first ones of sound, the late '30s, the later '40s, and the present—become at once apparent, and their significance exaggerated. A lack of distinguished work for a year or two, and the prophets consider that Hollywood must be slipping. It has probably been said about every year in which Hollywood has existed that conditions there are impossible for serious work, and the reasons each time are the same. Producers are frightened: censorship and pressure groups prohibitive: the whole atmosphere utterly hostile to the artist. Distinguished American writers go there, with depressing results, and their colleagues and the New York literary critics fire another salvo; distinguished foreign

directors arrive there, too, and the salvos echo across the Atlantic.

Yet, when all is said and done—the disenchanted novels, the exposures, the utterances of illiterate executives and the pruderies of censorship—the record can still speak for itself. In fact, when compiling this number, we found that Sight and Sound had, in the last few years, paid a number of tributes, which would have made the study of certain figures—Griffith, Chaplin, Ford, Welles, most of the outstanding contemporary talents—redundant. So we have tried, apart from considering the implications of a polaroid and/or panoramic future, to evoke a number of personalities and traditions that have been or still are important in the history of Hollywood. The approach has been specific—that is, through people, films, groups of films—rather than general; this is not another attempt to lift the cauldron's lid, but to renew a few contacts. "Hollywood" must be left to Hollywood.

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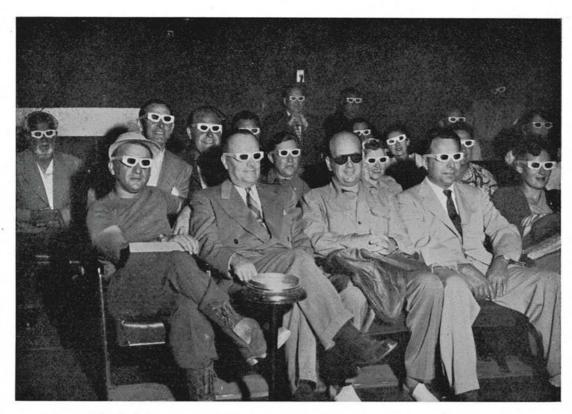
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The third dimension: polaroid viewers at a studio preview of "Bwana Devil".

# REPORT ON NEW DIMENSIONS

The third dimension, it seems, has taken everyone by surprise; even Hollywood, where it has been "created" seems still to be in the position of reeling back from the result, like Baron Frankenstein from his monster. Yet the stereoscopic image, or an illusion of it, has occupied inventors almost from the beginning of the cinema. Before Reynaud presented his Théâtre Optique in 1877, two Viennese pioneers had animated a three-dimensional image of an athlete performing a high jump; in 1896, Raoul Grimoin-Sanson patented an apparatus which he called, believe it or not, Cinéorama, by which a great battery of projectors (ten in number) threw panoramic images on a huge circular screen. His camera was equipped to take ten simultaneous pictures, and the programme he presented in Paris was a melange of travel material shot in Europe and Asia. (This fact is not referred to in Cinerama's history of itself.) In 1927, Abel Gance fanned out the battle sequences of his Napoléon to a triple screen and gave them a fresco-like effect; since 1948 he has been trying, without success, to amass sufficient financial support for a life of Christ on the triple screen, with stereophonic sound produced from loudspeakers ranged around the auditorium. In 1929 Autant-Lara's film of a Jack London story, Pour Construire un Feu, was photographed and projected so that the shape and size of the screen could be varied throughout, subsidiary action occurring on two smaller panels framing the main rectangle. As a result of it, he has recently made the claim in a French newspaper that he was the first to use Cinemascope. The idea of an enlarged screen with extended action on the outer panels was suggested to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences by Eisenstein when he visited Hollywood in 1930.

In the 30's, of course, a number of stereoscopic short films were made and viewed through coloured glasses; soon after the end of the second world war came the news that Soviet Russia had produced a full-length stereoscopic version of Robinson Crusoe; and for the 1951 Festival of Britain, Norman McLaren and others made three-dimensional films by methods now developed elsewhere. Oddly enough, while these last films excited a good deal of curiosity at the time, they were without immediate issue. It was, in fact, an entirely different process, Cinerama—reverting in method to the fifty-year-old apparatus of Grimoin-Sanson—of which the first programme opened in New York six months ago and is still running, that caused the present interest in the large screen in Hollywood. All the same, the Festival shorts sponsored by the British Film Institute were the first to realise some important effects of modern stereoscopy: only lack of capital prevented the techniques being more broadly exploited.

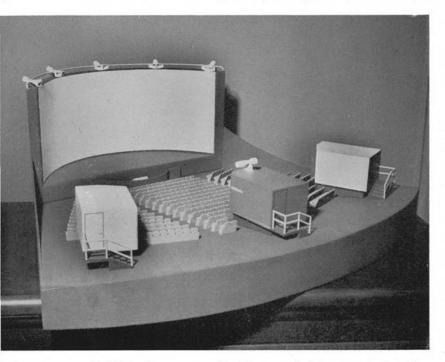
The immediate and direct impact of Cinerama on the American film industry—as opposed to its comparative neglect of stereoscopy—is in fact quite simply explained. In the field of dramatic entertainment, none of the early stereoscopic shorts had much to offer, and, more recently, McLaren's two abstracts, though perhaps the first to explore any of the technique's imaginative possibilities, were still not of the kind to persuade a showman that three-dimensional films might make millions. On the other hand, the Cinerama programme was deliberately designed for spectacular effect, and spectacular effect is what interests Hollywood particularly today: space, size, sweep, crowds, aerial panoramas, vast stage productionsthe material ingeniously and persuasively pointed to ways of heightening commodities of already high box-office potential. In the cinema, the biggest films make the biggest money, however hard we may try to rationalise our distaste by finding a few exceptions to the rule.

A recent issue of *Variety* contained a list of the films that had made most money in the history of the cinema.

The first four films on this list are The Birth of a Nation, Gone With the Wind, The Greatest Show on Earth, and Quo Vadis, and the runners-up include Duel in the Sun and Samson and Delilah. No lesson could be clearer than that. When Cinerama arrived in New York, the climate of American film production was, for many reasons, variable and receptive. After a quarter of a century of mass-produced sound films, inventiveness had dropped to a low ebb and, with the rival attractions of television, box-office figures had since 1948 been emphasising the fact. The answer to television was to exploit the special possibilities of the cinema, to mount the kind of spectacle (The Greatest Show, Quo Vadis, David and Bathsheba, etc.) with which no other medium could compete; these spectacles have proved by far the most financially rewarding of Hollywood's postwar activities—and now Cinerama, or a less costly version of it, seemed to offer the chance of making them even more spectacular.

The new enthusiasm, then, is not for an imaginative adjunct to the medium, but for an extra process of physical sensation; and here, as elsewhere, the analogy with the arrival of sound is not very exact. Sound did not arrive at a time of general depression and uncertainty, but merely revived the fortunes of a single depressed company, Warners. When The Jazz Singer started to draw large crowds, other companies cancelled their immediate productions in order not to give a competitor an economic lead. Today in Hollywood everybody's fortunes, it appears, need reviving, but the success of Cinerama has not caused a stampede of similar dimensions, and now that the first weeks of speculation, boasting and prophecy are over, one suspects that the prospect of a mass increase in capital expenditure has induced a certain caution. Only one company has taken the plunge: 20th Century-Fox's announcement that it has decided to use the Cinemascope process for all its major productions has not drawn a wholehearted response from any other of the leading studio executives, and whether or not Hollywood has a genuine "revolution" on its hands is unlikely to become apparent for some time.

The first Cinemascope film, a religious spectacle called



Model of a theatre equipped for Cinerama, showing screen, loudspeakers, projection booths.

The Robe, will not be unveiled before October. While the indications are that the enlarged concave screen rather than stereoscopic films requiring polarised glasses for viewing has the greatest commercial future, stereoscopy has made the first large-scale public appearance with Bwana Devil. This "Natural Vision" film, made by a system employing twin cameras, projecting two images simultaneously on to the screen in superimposition, and patented by the brothers Gunzburg, does little more than confuse the issue. In two dimensions Bwana Devil would be a below-average "B" picture, but in three it is making a great deal of money on novelty value. Apart from this, there are no economic or æsthetic conclusions which could not have been reached before.

Audience participation has always been a vital factor of the cinema's popular appeal, and the astute Variety pointed out not so long ago that, for this reason, stereoscopic films requiring to be watched through polarized glasses were unlikely to make a lasting impression. The glasses themselves created a psychological barrier between the individual and the image; and the nature of stereoscopy itself encourages an objective, detached attitude in the viewer. There is something disconcertingly artificial in its composition. In spite of the engaging claim made by the inventors of Natural Vision that Bwana Devil and its successors are "an aid to eye health"-" Because the eye is in the centre of the nervous system, the individual, after viewing a properly controlled Natural Vision picture, will leave the theatre feeling physically relaxed and with eyes more rested than when he entered. In fact, it is predicted that viewing a full-length picture in this system may do more for a person with weak eyes than would hundreds of dollars worth of eye treatment in a doctor's office"—it cannot be claimed that it is natural to watch people and objects in unlimited depth within a limited rectangle.

When the human eye records vision, it does so through a balanced perception of height, depth and width, and the effect of a stereoscopic image within a rectangular frame is, basically, to reverse the true impact of the third dimension. One is no longer looking at space graded into natural distances, but at a series of arbitrarily defined layers; one dimension is magnified at the expense of the other two, and thus, as an American critic commented, "it protrudes." Everything advances, nothing recedes. While McLaren's films showed that some striking and original effects of abstract perspective could be obtained, human beings in a stereoscopic image appear, by contrast, unnaturally distinct from their surroundings. present form, the two-dimensional film creates its illusion of depth, like painting, by the use of plastic and light values, and the picture that results is a balanced one; in its present form, the stereoscopic film leaves no room for any comparable illusion, any way of restoring an image thrown off balance-it is too committed to physical imitation of a new dimension, and the two others expose it.

The concave screen, however, reverses the situation. As with any art, illusion proves stronger than reality, and for this reason Cinemascope—like its big brother, Cinerama-looks æsthetically and economically more interesting. An illustration to this article gives some idea of the composition of a cinema equipped with panoramic projection, how the huge curved screen (in Cinerama six times the normal size, in Cinemascope two and a half times) dominates the auditorium in order to accommodate images which approximate to the human eye's frame of vision. Cinerama uses a triple screen—the centre one flat, the side panels curved-upon which three projectors throw three simultaneous images, creating one large one. The system is still technically imperfect, for the demarcation lines between the three separate pictures distract, as another illustration shows, but this is obviated by Cinemascope, which employs one projector, one screen, and thus one single picture at a time. Its panoramic effect is achieved by distortion and rectification, the camera's wideangle lens giving a distorted image which the "compensa-

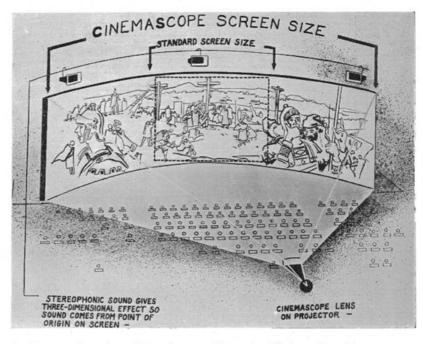
tion" lens on the projector makes natural.

The Cinerama programme in New York contains no really dramatic or narrative material, so it is difficult yet to judge how the cinema's present narrative resources may be adapted to it. A skilful potpourri, the programme includes picturesque travelogue scenes, a journey on a roller coaster, the ballet and the finale of Act Two of Aida at a production in La Scala, Milan, and a hugely impressive helicopter tour of the United States; there is only one complete misfire, in which the smartly knickerbockered Vienna Boys' Choir, assembled in the open air for a choral rendering of The Blue Danube, offer an experience that is visually unrewarding and musically questionable. But the programme undoubtedly succeeds in its main object, which is to prove that the projection of greatly magnified images on to a curved screen produces a unique effect of actuality, of "being there." On a roller coaster, on a gondola moving down the Grand Canal, in front of the stage at La Scala-when one seems to be watching the whole performance exactly as from the seventh or eighth row of the stalls, the eye choosing its own points of emphasis and focus-and above all in the magnificent aerial frescoes of the rich and changing American landscape, the illusion has an irresistible impact. The great discovery of Cinerama is liberation from the frame—released to exercise its full range of natural vision, the eye is drawn to space exactly as in real life.

As for the emphasis on spectacle, Cinerama and Cinemascope follow the tradition of other explorers of the triple screen, notably Abel Gance. By contrast, though, the Cinerama programme is ingenious but unimaginative in its explorations; they are exciting, but their excitement comes from the fact that an apparatus is speaking for itself. As Alistair Cooke has remarked, the sensation caused is basically that of Lumière's train fifty-five years ago when it flickered black-and-whitely into a station only this time the sensation is far more sensational.

While awaiting a selective use of the medium, it is clear that the advantages also suggest limitations; while it remains to be seen whether Autant-Lara's idea of varying the size of the screen can be successfully developed, or whether it proves, from a dramatic point of view, too distracting, the enlarged screen seems in itself destructive of intimacy. Many of the present refinements and com-plexities of film technique—the close-up, panoramic camera movement, dynamic editing (the "Odessa steps" sequence or its equivalent would be impossible to watch on such a screen)-will, one suspects, be lost on it. That it can be used excitingly for fresco-like effects is certain; that it will prove dramatically as versatile as the present screen seems unlikely. A comparison with painting, between what Rubens or Michelangelo achieved in covering a wall or a ceiling, and what Rembrandt brought to a portrait or a Dutch painter to an interior, seems the most apt yardstick of judgment at the moment.

At this stage, though, speculations cannot be taken very far. The flat sound film has been in existence for twenty-five years, its possibilities are far from exhausted, and many of them were not foreseen at the start. The Cinemascope film will need time to develop an æsthetic, and a more fruitful line of discussion at the moment may be as to how it will affect the future of the cinema as a whole. For two or three years, it is unlikely to offer much in the way of imaginative rewards. We may expect a



A diagram shows how Cinemascope achieves its illusion of multidimensional reality. Dotted lines show the size of the conventional screen as compared to Cinemascope's concave one; as in Cinerama, three-dimensional sound effects are obtained through "sound boxes" placed separately above the screen. Cinemascope, with which M.G.M. also plan to make a few films, is developed from a French patent by Henri Chrétien.

wave of pedestrian and vulgar spectacle, something already too familiar in two dimensions; the films are still going to be made by the same people, and in most cases the current productions are those originally planned for a flat screen. Paramount, for example, had begun an adventure story called *Sangaree* in two dimensions; after the success of Bwana Devil they shot the rest, and rephotographed what was already complete, in their own stereoscopic system, Paravision. A succession of items rushed into production, depending for their appeal on novelty rather than any creative impulse, seems inevitable. Fox's The Robe suggests the kind of thing this company has in mind-a further essay in the line of David and Bathsheba—and all its first twelve Cinemascope films, in fact, were previously announced for flat production. Warners have done something called House of Wax in Natural Vision, a story which appears to derive heavily from one of their earliest talkies, The Mystery of the Wax Museum; Columbia are making Fort Ti, an action story, in the same process; Universal have announced a piece of science fiction by a "secret" system; de Mille plans a remake of The Ten Commandments. . . . None of this rouses the appetite, and one waits for news of a filmmaker of sensibility venturing into the new medium.

In Europe, of course, repercussions from a production point of view are likely to be a great deal slower. There is less capital available for manufacture of equipment—all of which, apart from Stereo Techniques, is American financed—and one imagines that outside Britain there will be little more for some years than showings of imported American productions in a few large cities. Here, a rather curious situation seems to have arisen, with the Rank Organisation interested in equipping a number of its cinemas for Cinemascope (to show the Fox films when they begin to arrive in the autumn) and both Ealing Studios and London Films planning a limited amount of activity by the Stereo-Techniques process (a choice dictated, presumably, by the fact that it is the only one



Sketch of the crucifixion scene in "The Robe", by art director George Davis, for the Cinemascope screen; scale and size are illustrated in the diagram on the previous page.

at present available in this country). The Rank Organisation's move, it should be noted, is a considerable gesture of confidence in Cinemascope, for equipping theatres with the new screen and projector is considerably more expensive than showing *Bwana Devil* and other stereoscopic films, which involves a relatively minor adjustment of coupling two projectors together and investing in polarized glasses. It remains to be seen whether an American company makes any move to finance manufacture of large-screen equipment on this side.

The present sum of activity in Hollywood, with no company except Fox doing more than experimenting with two or three relatively modest films by one process or the other, suggests more a series of feelers than a confident conversion. M.G.M., for instance, is to produce a few Cinemascope features, but it is first testing public reaction by reviving some pre-war stereoscopic shorts that the company sponsored, and Dore Schary commented recently: "I believe that worldwide audiences will, in the next couple of years, help us to determine which films we should make in third dimension. . . . The public, as always, remains the final arbiter." His sentiment has been echoed by many active supporters of the third dimension, as well as by those who view it with mistrust and alarm. In Schary's case, too, this announcement, coming as it does from someone with responsibility for large-scale production, holds out hope of a discriminating attitude in one quarter at least.

The public, indeed, remains the final arbiter, and its arbitration cannot be felt until the novelty wears off. After that time, two possibilities remain. One is that the flat screen is still found to attract customers for certain kinds of film, in which intimate personal appeal, direct

communion with the stars, is necessary, and that Cinemascope is used in the same ratio to the ordinary screen as colour to black-and-white today—that is to say, for something over 50 per cent of all subjects. But if the public, so to speak, decides it likes ice-shows so much that it almost completely neglects the legitimate theatre, then one can see a vital division occurring in the cinema. With all the major companies devoted to big-screen production, the flat film might become simply an "art-house" attraction for the kind of public Arthur Knight describes elsewhere in this issue as The Reluctant Audience. In such a situation, the flat screen would be to the big concave screen approximately as 16mm. is to 35mm., and the concave screen might proceed to the final apotheosis already envisaged by enthusiasts: stereoscopic images projected on a vast circular screen.

Meanwhile, we have to wait for Cinemascope to achieve something in its own right, for Minnelli or Kelly to make a musical, or Ford a western, or somebody a really imaginative piece of science fiction—the destruction sequences from The War of the Worlds on Cinemascope is, certainly, a fascinating notion. One thing is certain: if Hollywood continues to regard the third dimension, or any approximation of it, simply as a cure-all for the present box-office decline, it will do no more than damage both itself and the third dimension. For, if the novelty wears away, the depression and its problems will still be there, and the new dimensions will have been nothing more than a novelty, crudely explored and then rejected. In this sense, Schary's words are perhaps the most encouraging yet pronounced by someone actively involved, and one hopes they will be heeded.

GAVIN LAMBERT.

Cinerama's range of vision: the demarcation lines point the total triple screen crea, in a shot of the audience at La Scala, Milan.



# TWO VIEWS OF THE HOLLYWOOD SCENE



The two views are critical and commercial: over the page, a selection we have made of the most notable films produced in Hollywood since the end of the war—of course, no list with which everyone agrees is possible, but it seems safe to say that while some might exclude and include a handful of different titles, the result would not radically alter the situation. tion: on your right, the top box-office winners during the same period, compiled from the racy but august columns of *Variety*. Minimum gross for a box-office winner of true distinction is \$4,000,000; the mightiest ones in these lists (*The Greatest Show on Earth, Quo Vadis*) took a great deal more, that is to say, over \$10,000,000.

The fact that only four of the critical choices (marked with an asterisk in the adjoining column) are also box-office the critical choices are nearly all unprofitable, only that their receipts were less spectacular. If all good pictures lost money, Hollywood would have stopped making them long ago. It is doubtful, indeed, if more than half a dozen of the critical

choices here were financially failures.

The lists do imply two important things. First, the production of superior, intelligent entertainment pictures has in the last few years increased. Secondly, fewer routine commercial cial films achieve the upper income brackets than formerly, and the only type of production with constantly, unmistakably high box-office potential have been spectacle films in colour. Each year shows a growing number of these, and in 1952 all the winners, with the exception of the phenomenal Martin-

Lewis comedies, were of this nature.

But the popularity of the spectacle film should not be taken as something specifically contemporary. Films like The Greatest Show on Earth and Quo Vadis would have been highly popular at any time; they belong to a long-established line of success. The present outbreak is due to particular circumstances, to the television threat, and they constitute Hollywood's reply to this threat. The main commercial operation in Hollywood at the moment is to produce more big films, an operation in which it is unrivalled. The more

NOTE: These lists have been compiled from information in VARIETY. The films are listed in order of merit, and no film that made less than \$4,000,000 has been included.

### THE BOX-OFFICE WINNERS

Leave Her to Heaven Meet Me in St. Louis\* Anchors Away Road to Utopia Thrill of a Romance Valley of Decision Weekend at the Waldorf

### 1946

Bells of St. Mary's Blue Skies Spellbound Notorious The Green Years Easy to Wed 2 Years before the Mast

### 1947

The Best Years of Our Lives\* Duel in the Sun The Jolson Story Welcome Stranger The Egg and I Unconquered The Yearling

### 1948

The Road to Rio The Paleface Easter Parade The Three Musketeers Johnny Belinda Cass Timberlane The Emperor Waltz and Red River

### 1949

Jolson Sings Again Joan of Arc You Can't Sleep Here The Snake Pit

### 1950

Samson and Delilah The Outlaw King Solomon's Mines Battleground Annie Get Your Gun Cheaper by the Dozen Cinderella

### 1951

David and Bathsheba Show Boat The Great Caruso A Streetcar Named Desire Born Yesterday An American in Paris\*

### 1952

The Greatest Show on Earth Quo Vadis Ivanhoe The Snows of Kilimanjaro Sailor Beware The African Queen Jumping Jacks

### ACADEMY AWARDS

1945: The Lost Weekend 1946: The Best Years of Our Lives

1947: Gentleman's Agreement

1948: Hamlet (Award for direction to John Huston, for Treasure of the Sierra Madre) 1949: All the King's Men

1950: All About Eve

1951: An American in Paris

1952: The Greatest Show on Earth

### SIGHT AND SOUND CHOICES

### 1945

They Were Expendable Meet Me in St. Louis Under the Clock A Tree Grows in Brooklyn The Southerner

### 1946

A Walk in the Sun My Darling Clementine Ziegfeld Follies From This Day Forward Make Mine Music

### 1947

Monsieur Verdoux The Best Years of Our Lives Body and Soul Gentleman's Agreement Crossfire

### 1948

The Search
Letter from an Unknown
Woman
Treasure of the Sierra Madre
State of the Union
The Pirate
The Snake Pit
The Naked City
The Lady from Shanghai
Macbeth

### 1949

Force of Evil They Live by Night The Set-Up A Letter to 3 Wives We Were Strangers

### 1950

On the Town
The Men
Wagonmaster
Sunset Boulevard
Intruder in the Dust
She Wore a Yellow Ribbon
Twelve O'clock High
The Asphalt Jungle

### 1951

A Place in the Sun Teresa Fourteen Hours Strangers on a Train An American in Paris The Red Badge of Courage

### 1952

Limelight
The Quiet Man
Death of a Salesman
Singin' in the Rain
High Noon

### NEW YORK CRITICS' AWARDS

1945: The Lost Weekend 1946: The Best Years of Our Lives 1947: Gentleman's Agreement 1948: The Treasure of Sierra Madre 1949: All the King's Men 1950: All About Eve 1951: A Streetcar Named Desire

1952: High Noon

modest and serious picture, however, is the one hardest hit by television, and this is a main factor in the failure of the Stanley Kramer Company to secure continued financial backing on its present scale. Kramer's only future, now that his agreement with Columbia has been terminated, lies in a reversion to the smaller, less costly kind of contract that he made with United Artists.

Films like The Men, Death of a Salesman, The Member of the Wedding, are commercial risks at any time, and never more so when the wind is blowing hard in the direction of Quo Vadis, de Mille, David and Bathsheba, etc. If the "art house" movement described in "The Reluctant Audience" had been more completely established and exploited when Kramer was producing these pictures, it might have proved his salvation; as it is, ordinary commercial exploitation and circuits geared to roistering mixtures of sex, colour and the Bible were probably the worst thing possible for them. One imagines that some of Kramer's Columbia pictures will recoup their costs and even show a small profit in the long run, but, again, Hollywood is now not disposed to take the long run into consideration (cf., The Red Badge of Courage). This is a discouraging outlook for the "offbeat" picture, and we may expect a decline in its production.

Another contrast the lists present is between the position of Hollywood's old hands at showmanship and old hands at making good films. The most commercially successful producers and directors today are those who have been in the business for many years—de Mille, of course, Goldwyn, Selznick, Disney, Zanuck, Mervyn LeRoy, David Butler, Raoul Walsh, Henry King, Michael Curtiz, and so on. While the critical record is not, as it turns out, an unremarkable one—for the post-war period has witnessed an exciting renaissance of the musical and the cartoon (U.P.A.), a wide range of topical melodramas and social essays, Kramer's courageous attempt at sustaining an independent experimental company, as well as outstanding work by Chaplin, Ford, Milestone—the Hollywood directors with a record of serious film-making behind them seem less fortunately placed today.

Consider the situation. It is unlikely that Chaplin will return to Hollywood; Capra has left it; Milestone has not made a notable film since A Walk in the Sun (1945); Wyler's career has shown many signs of unease and uncertainty since The Best Years of our Lives (1947), King Vidor has swerved into the obscurely bizarre (Ruby Gentry, etc.), Sturges has not made a film for five years, Borzage appears to have retired, Wellman omits regular potboilers, and Orson Welles, of course, left Hollywood in 1948. Of the younger directors, John Huston, one of the most widely admired, has already settled in Europe. The younger generation, in fact, seems oppressed by the twin threats of television (which has strengthened the position of de Mille et al.) and of the Un-American Activities Committee, as a result of which several talented people are not working.

A depression, or the advancing shadow of one, is notoriously the worst time for experiment or enterprise in the film industry, and from this point of view the amount of interesting work done in Hollywood over these last unsettled years surprises—but then, the resources of genuine vitality in Hollywood always surprise. At the same time, these resources are likely to be extremely hard-pressed in the future: The Robe on Cinemascope on the one hand, Martin and Lewis and Ma and Pa Kettle on the other, are likely to represent the two main production trends, exercising a kind of pincer movement on the no-man's land of Teresa, The Red Badge of Courage, Death of a Salesman, and so on. Hollywood has always been the prime example of art and commerce existing side by side, with the scales, of course, tilted in the latter's favour; and a further tilt in the favourable direction may be predicted.

The lists of "Oscars" and of the New York Critics' Awards

The lists of "Oscars" and of the New York Critics' Awards are interesting as indications of American films particularly admired in America, and of the extraordinary degree of agreement that seems to exist between the critics and the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences. The industry in Hollywood frequently complains of prejudice on the part of New York critics; but the highest ideals of each, it would seem, are the same.

NOTE: These titles are listed, tentatively rather than categorically, in order of merit. But in this case the sum is more important than the parts.

### THE OLD AND THE NEW

Hollywood to-day is still dominated by its veterans, artistically (Chaplin, Ford, Wyler) and commercially (de Mille, Goldwyn), people who were working in films at the beginning of sound, if not earlier. The younger generation, most of whom entered films during the 30's, came into prominence during the 40's, and now represents a solid-individually, perhaps, rather less striking-array of talent. The Old and the New contrasts these two sets of personalities. We hope that no one concerned will feel perturbed at inclusion under one or another of these slightly stark headings.



DARRYL F. ZANUCK. Aged 51. One of the youngest of Hollywood's top executives: vice-president in charge of production at Fox in 1935, at the age of 33. Serious, aloof, with reputation for great administrative efficiency. Has employed many notable directors, and past productions include Young Mr. Lincoln, Grapes of Wrath, The Purple Heart, All About Eve, Gentleman's Agreement, etc. Has lately pursued the literary cachet-Hemingway (Kilimanjaro), Steinbeck (Viva Zapata)and now the pioneer of Cinemascope, which may encourage (with The Robe) the David and Bathsheba bias towards high-toned religion-cum-sex.

CECIL B. DE MILLE. Aged 72. A producer-director for nearly 40 years, established in the 20's as Hollywood's spectacle king, a throne on which he still prosperously sits. A pioneer of the religion-cum-sex colossus, he received the Order of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, 1928. Hollywood's greatest and wisest spender, he is an expert at making expensive productions look expensive. Coming: The Ten Commandments (his 70th picture) in three dimensions.

LOUIS B. MAYER. Aged 67. Showman, acute businessman and fervent traditionalist. Made M.G.M. synonymous with certain Hollywood attributes-glamour, extravagance, extreme sentimentality, and the rest. Ideals: the American mother, big stars and vehicles for them, the Hollywood never-never-land. Supervised M.G.M. production from its beginnings until he resigned in 1951. Now president of Cinerama Inc., for which he foresees a great future and would like to produce a version of Blossom Time.

LEWIS MILESTONE. Aged 57. Began as a director in the late silent era: a few films of strongly personal inspiration (All Quiet, Of Mice and Men, A Walk in the Sun), appearing between many routine ones, established him with a high reputation. In Halls of Montezuma (1951) he seemed to betray the subject he had made peculiarly his own: the humane, honest study of men in battle. Latest, in England: Melba. An unpredictable.

### The Old

SAMUEL GOLDWYN. Aged 69. Entered films in 1913 with de Mille and Jesse Lasky, and had soon established himself as producer, showman, star-maker and occasional culture vulture, with a streak of genius in his contradictions. "Created" Vilma Banky, Colman, Gary Cooper and others: failed to create Anna Sten. Encouraged and financed Gregg Toland in his development of deep focus technique. A creative association with Wyler and Toland—Dead End, Wuthering Heights, The Little Foxes, Best Years of our Lives: fond of "artistic" spectacle— Goldwyn Follies, Hans Christian Andersen: and with a weakness for smooth, hometown weepies.

DAVID O. SELZNICK. Aged 51. Son of a silent film producer, began in his father's company as scenario editor. By 1931 an important production executive at R.K.O. where he produced the first Hepburn film. An association with M.G.M. culminated in the epoch-making Gone with the Wind. High intentions mingle with uncertain taste: Garden of Allah, Duel in the Sun, are clues to one strong side of his personality. His productions are usually cultured, elaborate, a little heavy and pretentious. Now operating from Italy. ALFRED HITCHCOCK. Aged 53. The most distinguished British director of the 30's, went to Hollywood just before World War II and has worked there most of the time since. Perhaps only one of his American films completely equalled his earlier work (Shadow of a Doubt), but his recent Strangers on a Train showed that his skill for suspense and inventive storytelling had far from deserted him. films are glossier than they used to be, but he remains one of the cinema's most original and successful entertainers.

GEORGE STEVENS. Aged 48. A young veteran who entered movies as a cameraman at the age of 16. Graduated to direction in the 30's, with a series of smooth, successful, anonymous films (Astaire-Rogers musicals, Alice Adams, Quality Street, Gunga Din). Then showed a distinctive flair for sophisticated comedy (Talk of the Town, The More the Merrier), and in 1950 made a film far more ambitious than anything previous, A Place in the Sun. Brilliant, mannered, a little sentimental, it nevertheless places him among the group of superior stylists. HERBERT J. YATES. Aged 73. Made his money in tobacco, began investing in pictures (Fatty Arbuckle comedies) in 1911. Formed Republic Pictures, 1932, and specialised in mass-produced westerns. Dedicated 9th Republic sound stage to Mabel Normand in 1938. The company branched out a few years ago and was at one time employing Welles (Macbeth), Milestone (The Red Pony), Lang (House by the River). Signed agreement with John Ford's company and hit the big time with The Quiet Man.



WILLIAM WYLER. Aged 50. Assistant director in the 20's, graduated from breadand-butter beginnings to one of the biggest reputations in film-making to-day, unrivalled as a craftsman—his work with Toland is among the most important Hollywood has produced in the last fifteen years-if somewhat tentative, unsure, as an artist. In the construction of his films, the brilliantly detailed handling of actors, his style is unmistakeable, and for this reason technicians admire him perhaps more than anybody else. It is difficult, though, to find many positive clues to personality in his films, particularly recent ones-The Heiress, Detective Story, Carrie, all impersonal, detached, a little dry. A prototype, perhaps, of the technician who is as good as his material.

CHARLES CHAPLIN. Aged 64. Film debut in Keystone Comedies, 1913. Since the early 20's has made eight feature-length films, counted among the masterpieces of the cinema, an almost unique record for anyone. The last three have had increasingly controversial receptions as the tragedy of the clown has come more and more to the surface. One of the cinema's rare independents, self-supporting, completely autonomous, he has made only films of his own choice for the last thirty years. Now in Europe, one guesses bitterly disillusioned with Hollywood and America, where a number of circuits have refused to-

show Limelight.

JOHN FORD. Aged 58. With Chaplin, the greatest representative of the older Hollywood generation, and a film-maker of humanist inspiration. Patterns in hiswork: affectionate re-creation of the pioneer Western communities (The Iron Horse, My Darling Clementine, Wagonmaster), development of a traditional American hero (Fonda, Wayne) poetic studies of the dispossessed (Grapes of Wrath, Tobacco Road). His good films have appeared between a great many potboilers. Like Chaplin with Limelight, has recently produced one of his most personal works: The Quiet Man. Latest: Gable and Gardner in Mogambo.



DORE SCHARY. Aged 47. Zanuck, the youngest of Hollywood's major executives. Playwriting, journalism, scripting, in the 30's. As producer at R.K.O. he encouraged new talent on a modest scale with Crossfire, They Live by Night, etc. At M.G.M. since 1948, has been more concerned, perhaps, with developing the "Schary touch" in his personal pro-ductions—The Next Voice You Hear, It's a Big Country, Plymouth Adventure, etc. But though the Sunday School element has increased, he is one of Hollywood's most conscientiously "improving" and serious producers, definitely on the side of the angels.

STANLEY KRAMER. Aged 39. shooting star? Former radio writer and film editor, he formed his own company, with writer Carl Foreman, in 1948, and supervised a series of courageously "off-beat" pictures—So this is New York, Home of the Brave, The Men, etc. Under an agreement with Columbia in 1950, the company enlarged its personnel and output. Results: filmed Broadway successes (Fourposter, The Happy Time, Member of the Wedding, Death of a Salesman) of varying quality. Box-office results discouraging, and the agreement terminates after The Caine Mutiny, Kramer's most ambitious film. Dynamic but erratic. JOSEPH L. MANKIEWICZ. Aged 44.

Scriptwriter in 30's (Our Daily Bread), then producer at MGM (Fury, Three Comrades, Philadelphia Story, etc.). Blossomed as director in the 40's, with gift for smart comedy—Letter to Three Wives, All about Eve—and has since taken himself with increasing (excessive?) seriousness, tackling negro problem, faith-healing, Shakespeare, to all of which attaches the smart

aura of Broadway.

Aged 42. A shorts JERRY WALD. producer in the 30's, then for many years at Warner Bros. (Action in the North Atlantic, To Have and Have Not, Mildred Pierce, Johnny Belinda, Caged, The Breaking Point, Glass Menagerie). Now an executive at Columbia studios, he is known as a live wire and has an almost precocious understanding of how to fashion a superior entertainment picture. LASZLO BENEDEK. Aged 46. Cameraman, cutter and production assistant in Europe before coming to Hollywood and securing an M.G.M. contract. First film as director, Sinatra's The Kissing Bandit. In 1952 made Death of a Salesman, which gave evidence of a solid, serious and promising talent.

### The New

VINCENTE MINNELLI. Aged 43. Theatre designer and director in the 30's, his first film, Cabin in the Sky (1943), showed the direction of his talent: refined visual taste, with touches of surrealism, a fluid use of camera, created a light, elegant, rhythmic dance film. Since then, Ziegfeld Follies, Yolanda and the Thief. The Pirate, An American in Paris have developed this line-the Dufy, if you like, of the musical. Another side of personality-the touching, nostalgic Meet me in St. Louis, the charmingly romantic The Clock-seems to have got lost on the way. A pity, for their potentialities were equally rich.

JOHN HOUSEMAN. Aged 51. Adventurous theatrical director of the 30's (Four Saints in Three Acts, Native Son), formed Mercury Theatre with Orson Welles in 1937. Went to Hollywood as producer for Paramount (Miss Susie Slagle's, The Unseen); then, Letter from an Unknown Woman (Ophuls), They Live by Night (Ray) and since a contract with M.G.M. The Bad and the Beautiful (Minnelli), Julius Caesar (Mankiewicz), a promising

sequence of creative production.

GENE KELLY. Aged 40. Actor, dancer, choreographer, director, and in his latest film, Invitation to the Dance, made in England, practically a one-man show. Kelly came to Hollywood from Broadway musicals, and with Minnelli rejuvenated the Hollywood musical. They have worked effectively together, even though their styles are different; Kelly's characteristic approach to the dance film, robust and dramatic, is seen at its best in On The Town. Next (with Minnelli): Brigadoon. BILLY WILDER. Aged 46. Worked in Europe (one film with Zinnemann), then scriptwriter, with Charles Brackett, for Lubitsch in Hollywood—Bluebeard's Eighth Wife, Ninotchka. Began directing his own scripts, still written with Brackett, in 1942—Double Indemnity, The Lost Week-end, Sunset Boulevard. His first film sans Brackett, Ace in the Hole, identified the persistent bitter flavour, sarcastic humour, as primarily his. An individualist, on the edge of being inhuman, his films are intelligent and frigid. Next: Pal Joey, and a project, Oedipus Rex.

GARSON KANIN and RUTH GORDON. Aged 41 and 56. A husband-and-wife team, probably the brightest scriptwriters in Hollywood. Both came to films from Broadway, she as actress and playwright, he as director and playwright. began directing films in 1938 (A Man to Remember, They Knew What they Wanted, Tom, Dick and Harry) but in spite of this auspicious start has not made a new film since 1942. With Ruth Gordon, has scripted two Tracy-Hepburn films (Adam's Rib, Pat and Mike) A Double Life, The Marrying Kind, all directed by George Cukor, bringing a breath of the New

Yorker to Hollywood.

JOHN HUSTÓN. Aged 46. A writerdirector; after several years of scripting, directed his own adaptation of The Maltese Falcon in 1941, a brilliant melodrama. His pictures since that time have proved him a gifted and intelligent craftsman, but lack a strong personal touch. Left Hollywood two years ago.



FRED ZINNEMANN. Aged 46. Technician in Europe before reaching Hollywood in 1929-first job, an extra in All Quiet on the Western Front. Now a leading realist director, with a sensitive style, a taste for original subjects and new actors. The Search, Act of Violence, The Men, High Noon, Member of the Wedding, constitutes one of the best contemporary records. Unlike some other directors, adept at realistic surfaces and topical approach, Zinnemann achieves a definite personal

ELIA KAZAN. Aged 44. Group Theatre background, as actor and director, and still divides his time between movies and plays, specialising in both cases in Tennessee Williams. His first film, A Tree Grows in Brooklyn (1945), was a charming piece of folklore; with Boomerang he developed his technique of a busy, hard realistic surface and quickfire style. Since that time has adeptly realised a Tennessee Williams play, Steinbeck's Viva Zapata, Zanuck's liberal racial films, Gentleman's Agreement and Pinky. An ingenious craftsman, versatile and detached.

The Missing

PRESTON STURGES. Aged 54. Former playwright (Strictly Dishonourable, etc.) he began scripting in Hollywood and then during the 1940's directed a brilliant series of comedies-The Lady Eve, The Palm Beach Story, Hail the Conquering Hero, etc. The last two (Unfaithfully Yours, Beautiful Blonde from Bashful Bend) were respectively slightly and very disappointing. Since the latter (1948), he has not worked in the cinema.

CARL FOREMAN. Aged 39. Former newspaperman and radio writer, he was associated with Stanley Kramer productions for So This is New York, Home of the Brave, Champion, The Men (writer), High Noon (writer-producer), building a reputation as one of Hollywood's most forceful Blacklisted by the Unscreenwriters. American Activities Committee, he can

no longer work in Hollywood.

FRANK CAPRA. Aged 55. Distinguished for his warm and racy pre-war comedies-Mr. Deeds, It Happened One Night, etc.— he supervised the "Why We Fight" series during the war and returned to Hollywood in 1946. Successive work (It's a Wonderful Life, Here Comes the Groom, etc.) disappointing: one good political comedy (State of the Union) commercially disappointing. Has now retired from filmmaking.



### Stroheim Revisited :

# THE MISSING THIRD IN THE AMERICAN CINEMA

### Gavin Lambert

A comparison. Left, Gibson Gowland and Jean Hersholt in "Greed" (1923). Right, Bogart and Walter Huston in John Huston's "Treasure of the Sierra Madre" (1948).



A just sense of perspective in the cinema has always been difficult to obtain; as an industry, its whole organisation is preoccupied with the present, and from a commercial point of view almost any product more than ten years old becomes an obsolete model, relegated to the secondhand stores and, eventually, the junkyard. In many cases it is not even thought worth keeping a record of, and the living past of the cinema depends now for its survival as much on a handful of archives as on the industry that gave it birth. By a combination of accident and independent rescue work, most of the great figures of the cinema remain—though not for everybody to encounter; and in this country the most important artist among the missing is Erich von Stroheim, not a single one of whose films he made as a director is in preservation here. Fortunately, prints of most of them exist in America, France and Italy; the films he made for M.G.M. (Greed, The Merry Widow) also remain, not in their original state, in that company's vaults in Hollywood; and in London, the New London Film Society has given single private showings, since the war, of Foolish Wives, Greed, the first part of The Wedding March, and the unfinished Queen Kelly; and that is all. At least it is good to report that plans are now under way for the acquisition of copies of Stroheim's major films, and for showing them in a forthcoming season at the National Film Theatre.

For in any consideration of the cinema as a whole, and the American cinema in particular, Stroheim's work is a vital factor, and his personal experience an object lesson in what can happen to a truly independent and uncompromising figure at odds with the commercial system. Of his nine films, only the first two, Blind Husbands and The Devil's Passkey, were released in the form that he made them, and one of them, his first and only sound film, Walking Down Broadway, was never shown at all; since its suppression (and remake, in 1933, by another director under the title Hello, Sister!) Stroheim has not succeeded in finding work as a film-maker again. To earn his living, he has had to act in literally dozens of degrading "B" pictures, and of his work as an actor

in the last 20 years only three examples are likely to survive: Renoir's La Grande Illusion, the version of Strindberg's La Danse de Mort (for which he also worked on the script), indifferently made on an inadequate budget but with five magnificent minutes at the end, and Wilder's Sunset Boulevard. No other artist in the cinema—except, in a different way, Eisenstein—has endured a comparable martyrdom; but time will restore Stroheim to his place as the missing third of the American cinema, along with Griffith and Chaplin, in the golden age—the 20 years between 1915 and 1935 when producers (sometimes to their cost) were more adventurous and censors more liberal.

II

Stroheim was born in Vienna in 1885. His mother was a lady-in-waiting to the Empress Elizabeth, his father a Colonel of Dragoons. His early years were spent between a military academy and the Austrian court; he joined the regular army, then the palace guard, but he had other ambitions, unformed yet urgent. He felt equally that the climate of Viennese life was unsympathetic, and that he wanted to be a writer. In 1909 he arrived, an almost penniless immigrant, in New York (a year before Chaplin), and after a series of jobs that included hawking fly-papers, teaching at a riding school, and three years as a Captain in the Mexican army, reached in 1914 a Hollywood that had only recently begun to exist, in the year that D. W. Griffith was preparing to shoot The Birth of a Nation. He obtained some intermittent work as an extra (notably in an adaptation of Ibsen's Ghosts), and then secured an interview with Griffith, who gave him no less than six negro parts to play. The Birth of a Nation was more than six months in shooting, and by the end of it Stroheim had become one of the four assistant directors. Griffith had taken a liking to him, and he remained within the Griffith Company for some time as an actor and as technical adviser for films with German backgrounds.

In 1916 Griffith began work on *Intolerance*. Stroheim was one of his assistants (by the side of W. S. Van Dyke and of Tod Browning, later to direct some original, cold-







blooded horror films, including The Unknown and Dracula), and played the small part of the Second Pharisee in the Judean episode. In the following two years, he continued as an assistant director, on Macbeth (with Beerbohm Tree and Constance Collier) and Fairbanks' Reaching for the Moon, and on Griffith's Hearts of the World, in which he played his first notable part, the Prussian officer. Many years later, on the occasion of Griffith's death in 1948, Stroheim gave a talk on the B.B.C. Third Programme, recalling their association. He paid tribute to his help, his pioneering influence, his charm, his "walk of a majestic cadence" and his odd taste for vulgar clothes; most significantly, he remarked that "it was Griffith who first felt the sacred duty to show everything, may it be sets, costumes, uniforms, customs or rituals, as correctly as humanly possible, even at that early stage . . . who felt personally responsible for the authenticity of everything. It was D. W. Griffith who first and fully realised the psychological effect of a proper and correct costume on the actor."

He had worked, on and off, for four years with "the Master," and it is odd to think now of the mutual respect and admiration that grew between these two men, both in their 30's (Griffith was only five years older), the one already a veteran of the cinema and at the height of his creative powers, a tall, quiet, solemn Southerner with most of the rather forbidding traditions and prejudices of his origin, the other an ambitious, temperamental refugee from a royal court, his talents scarcely developed at all. One had been born in a new, disturbed society created from bitterness and bloodshed, the other in a remote, decaying, imperialistic one; perhaps what attracted them to each other-apart, perhaps, from some private natural sympathies—was that both were, in a sense, exiles: cut off from their original environments and yet deeply influenced by them, moved by traditions formed in an earlier century. Both, in many ways, were oldfashioned, and yet Griffith had in some early two-reelers created one part of the "modern" American cinema, Stroheim with his first film, Blind Husbands, was to create the other.

III

Of the nine films that Stroheim was to direct between 1918 and 1932, four (Blind Husbands, The Devil's Passkey, Foolish Wives, Walking Down Broadway) were extremely bitter contemporary comedies of sexual manners, combining satire, melodrama and the pathological; four were set in the pre-World War I Austrian court (Merry-Go-Round, The Merry Widow, The Wedding March, Queen Kelly), and against a rich background analysis of its intrigue and corruption told the story of a prince who fell in love with a commoner; and one, Greed, stands apart, an onslaught on the social realities of America at the turn of the century. As a body of work, this is as substantial and idiosyncratic as anything in the cinema, the influence of Greed on American film-making has been a primary one, and in historical perspective, as will presently be seen, the position of Stroheim is fascinating.

Not having seen The Devil's Passkey and Walking Down Broadway, I can only write about Blind Husbands (1918)

Three aspects of "The Wedding March". Top: Stroheim as Prince Nikki, awakened by his flirtatious maid. Centre: the prince and the poor girl (Stroheim and Fay Wray). Below: violence of scene and setting, Schani's attempted rape of Mitzi.

and Foolish Wives (1921) as examples of Stroheim's creation of an extraordinary genre-something which seems broadly to spring from the same sources as the contemporary Austrian writers Schnitzler and Stefan Zweig (but with their own special extravagance, and the difference that Stroheim created as an American), and which influenced Lubitsch's comedies of amorous indiscretion and Pabst's picturesque dissections of postwar Berlin society. Blind Husbands, a slight and uneven film in the nature of a first sketch, tells the triangle story of an American couple on holiday in the Tyrol. The husband is a dull stick, a doctor more interested in mountain-climbing than his pretty wife, who is both frightened and attracted by the advances of a rakish Austrian officer (played by Stroheim). The situation is resolved by some crude and rather absurd melodrama on a mountain top, ending in the officer's death, but not before Stroheim has made some sharp points of sexual motivation and created, as well as his own character, an interesting portrait of the repressed, ambivalent wife. The film undoubtedly must have seemed more "shocking" at the time than now, for the personal situation contains an allegory of middle-class American attitudes to sex. The wife's response to the smooth lust of the Austrian (or "Continental") typifies something in the national temperament when faced with a direct invitation that custom demands-since it is highly immoral-to be made with great circumspection. The wife is unsatisfied by her husband, and there is no doubt that the gallant von Steuben could atone, most deliciously, for this; at the same time she feels guilty and nervous-isn't the Lieutenant such a personification of adultery? There is, here, no question of "love," only straightforward gratification. Thus the alternative to marriage, satisfactory or not, has continental wickedness written all over it.

The wife's character is shrewdly drawn, and played with feeling by Francelia Beddington; especially memorable are some brief yet brooding close-ups of her, haggard with boredom, desire and uncertainty, that attest at once how Stroheim had studied Griffith's use of the close-up, and seem to look forward to the treatment of Hedy Lamarr in *Extase*. More important, Stroheim acts and directs at the same time, and makes a first study of his incomparable middle-European libertine, to be explored to its full pathological reaches in *Foolish Wives*, then given an unexpected extension of human sympathy in *The Wedding March*. Immaculate, proud, sensual, full of a ruthless aristocratic vigour, it has a rare interior authority.

In Foolish Wives the figure becomes Count Wladislas Sergius Karamzin, a monstrous adventurer living at a Monte Carlo villa, the "Villa Amorosa," with two "cousins" who pass for Princesses, but are in fact recently out of prison. Sergius, who with their aid passes counterfeit money, and augments his income by seducing wealthy women and blackmailing them, picks the wife of the new American ambassador to Monaco (called Howard Hughes) as his next victim. What follows is a series of mordant and sometimes horrible episodes in which the Count ingratiates himself with this simple woman and meanwhile borrows money from his plain, pathetic, spinsterish maid, on the promise that he will one day marry her. The Ambassador discovers his intentions and so, in a different sense, does the maid; she burns down the villa and Sergius, to relieve his nerves, climbs into the bedroom of an idiot girl (daughter of a colleague who makes the counterfeit money), rapes her, is discovered by her father, murdered and thrust down a sewer.

This fantastic tale is narrated with a brilliant and massive accumulation of detail. Untidily constructed (a fault of most of Stroheim's films, which make their effect by the sheer weight and invention of episodes piling one upon another), shifting in its emphases, it seems at times to be encompassing too much; but its dramatic tension survives through rich, masterly character studies and the unfailing inner conviction. The backgrounds, using only a few stock shots of Monte Carlo, show the flowering



Sophisticated but disintegrating aristocrat: Seena Owen as Regina in "Queen Kelly".



Mitzi (Fay Wray) and Schani (Mathew Betz) in the crowd at the wedding of Nikki and Cecelia in "The Wedding March".

of Stroheim's passion for detail, which he so much admired in Griffith—the arrival, with due ceremonies, of the Ambassador and his wife: the gaming rooms at the Casino with their frightening assortment of predatory old women, silly young ones, gloomy bearded fanatics and a sprinkling of cripples (an obsession that was to grow): the carefully integrated reminders of poverty, groups of ragged children in the streets and the slum in which the old counterfeiter lives, the hideous, cackling old crone on crutches at the cottage where Sergius and Mrs. Hughes take refuge during a rainstorm, and his advances to her are obstructed, ironically, by a monk who also arrives for shelter: the appalling episodes with the maid, lonely and jealous, scrutinised in some long, unflinching close-ups that are among the most daring in the cinema, and superbly played by Dale Fuller.

Society in this film is spectacularly on the declinespiritually and materially on the verge of bankruptcy, a collection of fakes, eccentrics and adventurers centred on a pleasure-drome. The only ordinary people-apart from the American couple, simple souls from a new world who throw this decaying Europe into focus—are the poor, and most of them are shown as deformed or mentally The parallel with Vigo's A Propos de Nice (1930) seems very close. ("We are spectators at the trial of a particular world," wrote Vigo, "... the last twitchings of a society that neglects its own responsibilities to the point of giving one nausea.") But this outpost of grotesque pleasure-seeking is only the background. Foolish Wives is primarily the study of Sergius and his entourage, personifications of decadence on an almost heroic scale. The libertine's sexual appetite has grown prodigious: two "cousins," a wretched maid (permanent), the quest for Mrs. Hughes, and the final vertiginous swerve whereby an idiot girl appears a temptation and a challenge. For the sexual adventure, one feels, is the motivating force for Sergius. The confidence tricks, the counterfeiting, the blackmail, are incidentals. The purpose of seducing Mrs. Hughes is to extract money from her, but in a sense this is lost sight of—the seduction itself becomes an affair of honour, a pathological hunger to be sated and an immense vanity to be appeased. For the other side, so to speak, of the coin, is the maid—incarnate denial of satisfaction, cringing, unlovely and defenceless. The fate of Sergius and his colleagues is appropriately violent: he himself strangled and bundled into a sewer in a chilly dawn, the maid throwing herself over a cliff, the "Princesses" stripped of their jewels and wigs and removed again to prison. These resolutions, as always with Stroheim, have the force of a moral judgment. He is in no doubt of the viciousness of the society he portrays, though at the same time he feels himself a product of it and cannot escape its fascinations.

Foolish Wives was conceived to run for three hours, with an interval halfway through. The studio disagreed, and cut it from 21 reels to 14, an occurrence that was to be repeated with all Stroheim's succeeding films. On this account one is tentative of a final criticism on Stroheim's method of construction, for a work designed on a large scale, appropriately flexible in its development, usually suffers most from cutting-contrivances of plot become more naked, bones are unexpectedly stripped of flesh. In the existing copy of Foolish Wives, the final scenes are badly mauled. All the same, other passages show Stroheim's obsession with detail could be unselective and betray him into irrelevancies. There was no need to show the work of the fire brigade in fighting the fire at the villa with an almost documentary fullness, nor does one imagine that the shortening of the Prince of Monaco's reception for the American ambassador entailed any significant loss.

### IV

As Blind Husbands proved to be a first sketch for its two successors, so Merry-Go-Round (1922, finished by another director after disagreements with the studio) seems to have served as an overture to the great themes of The Merry Widow, The Wedding March and Queen Kelly. For the first of these, which I have not seen—the only time Stroheim as director accepted an "assignment"—he took the operetta's central situation, the Prince of "Monteblanco" who fell in love with an American



Stroheim's unflattering portraits of American women : three of them in " The Devil's Passkey ".



Zasu Pitts as Trina in "Greed".

actress, and set it against a background of court intrigue and decadent aristocrats clearly drawn from his personal experience of the Austrian monarchy. Some of this was removed from the final version, but a strong characteristic portrait remained—Baron Fedoja, an aged shoefetichist, who dies from uncontrollable excitement and locomotor ataxia at the jewelled feet of his wife on his wedding night.

The Wedding March is a more substantial film than Foolish Wives, and it seems now, in many ways, the richest of all Stroheim's work. Its picture of a collapsing aristocracy is more powerful and complex, there is a solid grandeur about it; and there is also something to The intrigues of the Wildeliebeset against it. Rauffenbergs, members of the Austrian royal family, demand that their son, Prince Nikki, make a "good' marriage—their chosen victim is Cecelia, the lame, spinsterish daughter of a cornplaster magnate (a kind of irony which Stroheim can never resist). Nikki, a vain philanderer, resigns himself to a life of dutiful marriage with pleasurable adulteries on the side, but when he falls genuinely in love with the daughter of a poor violinist, the prospect appears intolerable. From this classically simple situation, Stroheim extracts some classic antitheses: the social barriers of rich and poor, the rake fascinated by the innocent virgin and his discovery of true passion, the helplessness of real feelings when these conflict with the interests of a privileged, cold-blooded ruling class-and the latter's meaningless victory, since history is about to overtake it.

The same situation recurs in Queen Kelly, in which the pleasure-loving Prince falls for Patricia Kelly, demure orphan beauty from a convent school, kidnaps her and takes her to the palace although he is due to be married next day to the ferocious and eccentric Queen Regina. Again innocence has the power to charm and reform, but proves helpless; the incensed Queen drives Kelly from the palace with a whip, and the girl drowns herself. Another loveless and brutal marriage of convenience will

prop up a régime that has no chance of surviving. (Stroheim has said that this story, which runs ten reels, was to be only the "prologue" to a longer episode set in Africa; production was interrupted by the advent of sound, and Gloria Swanson, who play Kelly, herself supervised the shooting of an epilogue to the prologue, which Stroheim himself repudiates. Similarly, the second part of *The Wedding March*, called *The Honeymoon*, was not completed because of studio objections, and released in a version again rejected by the director.)

To these four films of royal Vienna, Stroheim conceived the addition of a fifth and last several years later in France. It was to mark his return as a director. Called La Dame Blanche, with dialogue by Jean Renoir, it exists only in scenario form. Herman G. Weinberg, who has read it, comments: "This was to have been the swansong of a Stroheim's films on Vienna, based on a legend that an apparition called 'The White Lady' was seen to float through the halls of the palace in Schonbrunn on the eve of the death of a Hapsburg or of disaster for Austria. On the eve of the anschluss with Germany, 'the White Lady' floats out of the castle over the city of Vienna. The scenario is remarkable for its use of symbolisms, its tenuous valse triste mood and as a declaration of love to a dying culture." Alas, the contract was signed with a French producer a few days before the outbreak of war in 1939, and Stroheim's comédie humaine of Vienna remains incomplete.

The remains, though, are still a remarkable achievement. Both *The Wedding March* and *Queen Kelly* strike directly at moments an emotion that none of Stroheim's other films, *Greed* included, attempt: tenderness. The long central passages in both, in which the debauched prince genially breaks down the young girl's resistance and, in doing so, discovers the reality of love, are subtle and affecting. Here Stroheim's apprenticeship to Griffith reaps one of its most valuable rewards, in the deliberate, minutely studied close-ups of the human face; the acting in these films has a depth and intricacy of expressiveness







that need two or three viewings fully to absorb. Stroheim develops his love passages with a kind of cinema draughtsmanship, fine and meticulous, as the exotic society against which they are set is broadly, extravagantly, stroked in. The gallery of characters is a unique onein The Wedding March, Prince Nikki's parents, the gross, stumbling Prince Otakar and his elegant, cigar-smoking wife Maria; the coarse and brutal butcher, Schani, with whom the unfortunate girl is finally left; the crippled, calmly anguished Cecelia; even a glimpse of the Emperor Franz Josef, senile beneath panoply and medals: and in Queen Kelly, the unforgettable Regina, wandering naked with a white cat round her magnificent palace, lolling back in an empty marble bath for a pedicure, cat on shoulder, a box of veronal and a sumptuous edition of The Decameron nearby. These are figures of a bizarre magnificence reminding one of Balzac, and the captions insist in a nineteenth century way on the great abstractions of "fate" and "history" and "destiny." The resplendent settings inspire Stroheim to moments of intense imagery that he equalled, in a different key, only in Greed. During the spacious, glittering ritual of a royal parade in The Wedding March, the young girl in the watching crowd becomes aware of the confident, tightly breeched thigh of the prince on horseback above her. Later, she throws a flower into the opening of the breeches. Cecelia receives the news of her engagement (contracted in a brothel by the two drunken, lecherous old fathers concerned) standing in the hall of her home, in a white dress, releasing a clutch of white doves; Schani's attempted rape of Mitzi occurs in his slaughterhouse, hanging carcases and graffiti gruesomely heightening the scene; and at the wedding of Prince Nikki and Cecelia, during which the camera cruelly insists on her limping progress down the great cathedral aisle, the hands on the organ keyboard dissolve to the withered hands of a skeleton, and after this hallucinating prophecy of dust and putrescence the solemn vows are taken.

"I consider that I have made only one real picture in my life," Stroheim remarked after *Greed*, adding that the producers had allowed only its remains to be seen. In the sense that *Greed* (1923) touches contemporary reality very closely, he was right; perhaps no American film has recreated the existing surface of one section of American life more unsparingly. But what Stroheim was trying to do in this film was not what those who call it "obvious" reproach it for -taking more than two hours to show that worship of Mammon is wicked—nor to indulge in realism for realism's sake. *Greed* is a new version of an old truth.

Its theme is not lust for money; the film is, rather, the dramatic casebook of a terrible human frustration and, finally, madness, which expresses itself in the actions and fantasies of a miser. More than that, it offers a judgment on the thwarted, inarticulate desires of wretched, poverty-stricken people. The motivation is, once again, sexual—the shy virginal Trina marries the genial but brutish dentist McTeague, and a clumsy wedding night leaves her impregnably frigid and terrified. Her desires Styles in social groups. Top: Lillian Gish in Griffith's "The Musketeers of Pig Alley" (1912). Centre: McTeague and Trina (Gibson Gowland, Zasu Pitts) at their wedding party, in Stroheim's "Greed" (1923). Below: The Ambersons entertain (Agnes Moorehead, centre) in Welles' "The Magnificent Ambersons" (1942).

are twisted into one direction only, the acquisition of gold. She hoards a growing sack of money under her pillow, sleeping with the precious coins instead of her husband, goes without food, exhausts herself with manual work, all for the sake of satisfying what is really a supreme act of denial, a sexual devotion to a non-sexual object. McTeague is too stupid, too innocent, to under-He loses his practice because he has never qualified, and poverty degrades the couple horribly. At last in desperation he murders Trina, takes her gold, and flees in panic from San Francisco to the wastes of Death The last half-hour describes the pursuit of McTeague by a former suitor of Trina, the only member of a posse to catch up with him. Exhausted and bitter, the two men confront each other on the parched, flat sands; the mule carrying the only water-bottle runs off, and in firing at it they hit the bottle, the water streams out over the gold, and a few hours later, handcuffed together, they are dead from thirst and exposure under the burning sun.

Stroheim wrote his screenplay from Frank Norris' novel, McTeague, again conceiving a work on an immense scale which was cut down by more than half for release, the only version extant today. A complete subplot is missing; the courtship of Trina by McTeague in the first part appears too sudden and hurried; and yet, with all these gaps, with the dislocation of the original structure, Greed survives powerfully as a whole. One is even tempted to wonder whether, in planning his story in two parts of between two and two and a half hours each, Stroheim did not miscalculate. The result might have been unendurable. The level of reality is so concentrated, so unremitting, that at the end of ten reels the spectator is practically exhausted. At the same time, the drama gains from this newly-imposed concentration, and to disperse it would almost certainly be to weaken its impact. One thing Stroheim failed to learn from Griffith was the dynamic power of editing.

The realism of *Greed* is not exterior, but assimilated, an outward projection of the characters and the drama. One dreads the peeling wallpapers, the unmade bed with

its dirty linen, the piles of unwashed dishes, the ragged bandages on Trina's fingers after McTeague has bitten them in an attempt to force money out of her, the whole hideousness and squalor of the San Francisco apartment, not in themselves but for the revelation of human debasement. At times this kind of detail rises to an intense symbolic crystallisation of a scene—the train roaring by when McTeague and Trina embrace in the station yard, the funeral procession glimpsed through the window during the wedding reception, the coffin beyond the baked meats, and the marvellous succession of closing shots, with the sun beating down on two bodies together on the cracked earth, the dead mule, the caged bird that has been given its freedom and is unable to fly, the spilled and useless gold, all left to the anonymity of the desert valley.

The imagery has a sombre consistency. All the action (none of it shot in a studio), apart from a short bleak prologue showing McTeague working in a Californian goldmine, a labourer taking correspondence courses on dentistry, takes place either in the suburbs of a San Francisco in the throes of grimy industrial growth, or in the dry, bare landscapes of Death Valley. The effect is so hypnotic that hardly anybody has noticed, as Rodney Ackland has pointed out, that in the location scenes in San Francisco itself the passers-by are wearing the clothes of the 1920's, whereas the actors are costumed in a style two decades earlier. This is, perhaps, the one example of a lapse in Stroheim's monumental care for detail.

The social verdict is inflexible. The end of the film leaves one with an appalling sense of human waste, of futility, of the drabness and cruelty of lives stifled by ignorant poverty. Every character in the film is overwhelmed by it. Nothing is left but the folly of ambitions that never had even the vestiges of grandeur. One begins by pitying Trina, but she, too, becomes finally contemptible, and about the simple loutish McTeague one can only feel he is unlucky. With an ordinary wife he would have lived contentedly, if hideously. Stroheim's protagonists have in fact the possibility of choice—Trina, as

(continued on page 204)



Cesare Gravina in a deleted passage from "Greed".









How they change—30 years of Gloria Swanson. 1923: "Bluebeard's Eighth Wife." 1927: "Sadie Thompson." 1934: "Music in the Air." 1951: "Sunset Boulevard."

### STARS

### Catherine de la Roche

Every Hollywood star is involved, somehow, in the star system. Many have fought it. Some might claim to have achieved success in spite, not because, of it. Few would deny its power. It has raised nonentities to eminence and it has wasted genius; it has popularised some great artists, developed some outstanding talent. Now, if Hollywood agrees with Sam Goldwyn, most fabulous of star-makers, it may undergo a revolution. For he has said that in order to compete with television the cinema must raise its standards, and the emphasis must be shifted from stars to stories.

If this happens, the basis of the star system will no longer be the star's identity with one type of rôle; for the star system is really the principle of type-casting, which is the reverse of casting. Since it began, men and women, selected for qualities which producers considered fashionable or popular, have been developed as half-synthetic characters for presentation in films designed as vehicles, and with publicity to match. The theatre, of course, also launches personalities, and plays are sometimes written for them, but only Hollywood has specialised in the fabrication on an industrial scale of popular types. It has always been a gradual two-way process, now starting, now following, trends in manners, appearances and human values. In the earlier silent pictures, Latin lovers, mysterious vamps and angelic maidens had been portrayed, publicised and adored as extraordinary beings; Cecil B. de Mille, spreading his cult of "sex-appeal" in the 'twenties, brought the stars closer to the public, and the public could begin to identify itself with these projections of favourite types. With the arrival of talkies, the identity of star and rôle had to be made more plausible, personal background became more important, contrasts between heroes and villains less marked. The levelling phase was on: stars had to be glamorous yet attainable, enviable though deserving of sympathy, distinctive but also "ordinary." To attract the majority of people, they had to have it both ways in most things.

So the system, like the stars, has had it both ways. Lists of Academy and critics' award winners show an impressive range of talent. Lists of popularity poll winners show the spectacular success of certain Hollywood types, natural or

manufactured. But the significant thing is that a considerable number of names on both sets of lists overlap. They include Olivier, Peck, Tracy, Gary Cooper, Kirk Douglas, Bing Crosby, Cagney; Garbo, Bette Davis, Bergman, Dietrich, Gish. And one reason for the dual achievement of these players is that certain tenets of the star systemof which the aims are primarily commercial—and of true acting, happen to overlap. In his book on acting, Pudovkin, applying Stanislavsky's realist principles to the cinema, writes that an actor's performance should be partly conditioned by his audience, that in playing to unknown millions he must make his idiom universal; and, again, that any portrayal should to some extent spring from the player's own personality, his background and education must be suitable for it. Thus, when confronted with identical problems, artist and businessman sometimes find similar solutions.

For the producer, at all events, any method capable of increasing the effectiveness of the star system is a good When Hollywood eventually discovered psychoanalysis, its possibilities not only as a dramatic theme but as a guide to star recruitment were promptly explored. While screen characters of the mid-1940's were smitten by an epidemic of schizophrenia and compulsion neuroses, aspiring Goldwyn girls, for instance, were put through a temperament analysis to ascertain their psychological aptitude for stardom. They got more marks for demonstrating such traits as ambition, stamina, versatility of interests or a jealous (hence competitive) disposition, than for human sentiment or the kind of sympathy that might sap a girl's material or emotional resources. . . . People like this have, of course, been known for a long time, without benefit of psychoanalytic testing, as careerists more likely to succeed. But, as soon as it became possible, Hollywood made doubly

With all this thoroughness, the artificiality and standardisation of the star system have always produced their own antidotes. The levelling period of the 'thirties had its later reaction; since that time there has been an uneven but continuing increase in diversity of talent, the women catching up with the men, who have always been allowed more individuality—partly because fashions in feminine styles

change more often. For this reason, too, the life—or popularity span—of a female star is always shorter: no Sunset Boulevard or The Star about a man. If, on the silent screen, women were nearly always either good or bad, from the 1930's onward they could be tantalisingly both, and sex-appeal came to terms with virtue. Most of the stars, with a few notable exceptions like Jean Harlow, Mae West or the splendid Dietrich, stopped specialising as seductresses; but they continued to embody sex-appeal. By the 1940's there had fully emerged what Drs. Wolfenstein and Leites call in Movies: A Psychological Study the "good-bad girl"—the vamp promoted to respectability, or the nice girl with oomph.

II

A process which involves so much manufacture of human beings inevitably offers striking contrasts between the natural and the synthetic. Some stars have seemed to reflect the personality of their creator rather than their own. Howard Hughes, a specialist in sultry seductresses, created Jean Harlow, a talented actress and a natural exponent of the type; but when he attempted the same thing with Jane Russell, the effect was lacking in vitality. In fact, this star broke away from her sullen Outlaw type of characterisation and revealed a quite simple, sunny, good-natured personality. Again, the career of Joan Crawford, a player of great technical skill, perhaps typifies the manufacturing process, for she has succeeded in being a star for a longer time than almost any other woman by a series of metamorphoses, by allowing herself to be "re-made" every few years to suit a new fashion. In this way her temperament has seemed almost the least important factor of her success as an actress.

Recruiting talent from all over the world, from the theatre, variety, radio, Hollywood has assembled a dazzling array of players. Many, especially those with a heart, could never have passed that temperament analysis, nor were they required to! With some Hollywood has failed, and nearly always by trying to impose a synthetic mask on a strong natural personality, so that a conflict rather than a contrast results. Anna Sten, from Soviet films in the 'thirties, never became popular, despite Sam Goldwyn's publicity campaign for her, his attempt to turn her into an exotic musical actress when her talent did not lie in the direction of singing or dancing; Micheline Presle from France, Valentina Cortese from Italy, never found suitable rôles. Yet with some of the most individual talents of all, Hollywood has excelled: Greta Garbo, great and incomparable artist as she is, owes her success to the Hollywood organisation

which provided her with a steady succession of rewarding parts that kindled the mysterious passion of her temperament, and had even the skill to capitalise on her aversion to publicity, popularising her as the star who wished to be alone, something that seemed to match exactly her personality on the screen. With a small élite of theatre artists such as Katharine Hepburn and Dorothy McGuire, Hollywood has collaborated wisely, allowing them freedom to extend their experience by intermittent work on the stage and to retain the individuality which is their most precious asset. But these are hardly characteristic products of the star system. Bette Davis is almost unique in that she has fought the system while belonging to it, alternating effective hokum with brilliant performances in prestige films. It seems ironic that, having won her independence, she should now have reverted to hokum in The Star, especially as her performance itself is magnificent.

For the rest, the careers of female stars can be divided between individuals of outstanding personal talent; skilful players who typify the tastes of their period or generation; and those, like Crawford, who have been able to change their styles. The 'thirties, for instance, also created Carole Lombard, the most delicate satirical comedienne the screen has ever had. With Bette Davis, Hepburn, Rosalind Russell and Garbo, she belonged to the élite of the period. The rest reflected, more simply, types—Janet Gaynor, the hometown girl; Shearer and Kay Francis, the sophisticates; Irene Dunne and Claudette Colbert, the light comediennes—each distinctive in her way and yet finally more typical

of the tastes of audiences.

The 'forties brought a greater diversity of serious dramatic actresses-Bergman, de Havilland, Vivien Leigh, Jennifer Jones, Joan Fontaine. The glamour girls (Lamour, Grable) showed how sex-appeal had also become wholesome, while the blonde bombshells (Bacall, Lana Turner) were finally more sentimental than their predecessors, and caused a French critic to react with alarm to the idea that they represented the modern femme fatale. Finally, they were burlesqued by two brilliant comediennes, Judy Holliday and Jan Sterling. And of those who managed to change their styles, Joan Crawford of course graduated from ordinary working-girl rôles to elegant high-class ones; Myrna Loy, starting as a vamp, became a comedienne and then a straight, homey actress; Ginger Rogers and Ida Lupino, who both began as dancers, branched respectively into comedy and high drama; and Gloria Swanson has been everything from bathing belle to tragedienne. I must confess there are still a few lovelies between whom I can









Fashions in blondes. Left to right, bombshell of the early '30's—Jean Harlow: middle '30's sophisticate—Carole Lombard: slinky '40's charmer—Lauren Bacall: today's dumb burlesque—Judy Holliday.



Contrasts in popular heroes. Left, Henry Fonda: centre, John Wayne: right, Kirk Douglas. Fonda, one of the best star actors the screen has produced, has something of the 30's modest, home-town quality—he came into prominence when these qualities were popular—but also a gentleness and poetic sensibility uniquely his own. His most successful films were with John Ford ("Young Mr. Lincoln," "The Grapes of Wrath," "My Darling Clementine") and Preston Sturgess ("The Lady Eve"). He left the screen for the stage five years ago. Wayne represents the tough, rugged type at its most popular; a 'natural' rather than an actor, his personality has been most skilfully exploited by Ford ("They Were Expendable," "The Quiet Man"), who has tapped its most genial vein. Kirk Douglas-leads the contemporary American 'dynamic' actors—tough and intelligent, aggressive and neurotic. In "Champion," "Ace in the Hole," "Detective Story," "The Bad and the Beautiful," he has created a set of variations on the theme of this hero.

hardly distinguish, even when they are named; nor did I see much difference between Hedy Lamarr's Delilah and Susan Hayward's Bathsheba. But, in general, it seems to me that Hollywood has been typing its players less and enlisting them more imaginatively. Perhaps this in itself supports Goldwyn's prophecy.

III has i

An Ukrainian proverb has it that men fall in love with their eyes, women with their ears. If this is true, it may be one reason why talent, rather than good looks, has always counted more in the recruitment of men than of women, and why fashions in male types are less fluctuating. None of the types of the silent screen has disappeared entirely. We remember it above all for the Latin lovers, dare-devils like Fairbanks, lady-killers like John Gilbert, and the marvellous comedians. It is true that, like their feminine partners, men were somewhat standardised in the 'thirties: a reaction against the Latins left Charles Boyer alone in the field, and there was instead a cult of the modest, dependable home-town boy so often played by Gary Cooper and James Stewart, later by Van Johnson. But this was not in itself a new type, only one that sprang into a new prominence, like the current revival of the daredevil fashion, which has given Burt Lancaster in The Crimson Pirate and Errol Flynn in his pirate pictures a new upsurge of popularity.

The relative stability of male types has allowed for greater variation within the types, whereas with women there is usually only time for a new fashion to be explored superficially, one-dimensionally. Some good actors—Henry Fonda, Spencer Tracy, Paul Muni, Gary Cooper, Edward G. Robinson, Charles Laughton, Laurence Olivier, Gregory Peck—may have cursed at the routine films they have had to make in between the better ones, but they have all the same been allowed to create a great variety of valid characterisations. And some equally popular stars like John Wayne, Alan Ladd, Ray Milland, whose range can hardly

be described as varied, have also, through skilful handling, been offered exceptional opportunities. The last ten years or so, too, confirm one's impression of the continuance of male talent; Kirk Douglas, Robert Ryan, Dana Andrews, may (like the late John Garfield) have the type of masculine charm that draws women to the cinemas, but their intelligence and talent are an essential part of their success. The dynamic appeal of artists like Orson Welles and Jose Ferrer again lies mainly in their talent as actors. Most recently, Marlon Brando and Montgomery Clift represent the brilliantly gifted rebels who, insisting on free-lancing, have not yet achieved international standing. But they have star quality, and if Hollywood gives them good enough rôles without attempting to type them-in the case of Brando this is being done—they will surely become outstanding stars. Clift's acting with Elizabeth Taylor in A Place in the Sun, and Brando's in A Streetcar Named Desire, are amongst the best performances in the last

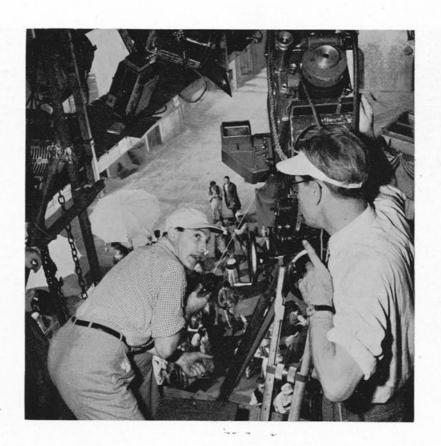
At its worst, then, the star system has led to the falsification of life in films devised to fit synthetic and fabricated personalities of its own creation, but at its best it has developed some great artists and brought their art to many people. Hollywood showmen have an eye for detecting that kind of authority in human beings which Marlene Dietrich once said was the making of glamour, and many directors and technicians are exceptionally skilled at handling it. The word "Hollywood" evokes above all a fresco of star images. Now, if Goldwyn is right, and stories are about to take precedence, the stars' scope should be widened and the demands on them, at the same time, more exacting. Moreover, if stereoscopy is widely adopted, that too will have its effect; only artists with real, natural presence will be able to stand up to the closer scrutiny of the audience and the increased lifelike power of the medium. One waits to see, yet again, if Hollywood acts as shrewdly as it often does.

### **Americans Abroad**

## Invitation to the Dance

As, in the 20's, a great deal of talent from Europe—directors and players—went to Hollywood, so a feature of the 50's is the export of American talent to Europe. American directors combine with foreign players, foreign directors with American players. Economic reasons, as so often, have dictated the move (frozen dollars to be thawed), but it has, fortunately, resulted in a few remarkable collaborations, to which the following pages are devoted.

Gene Kelly has recently finished shooting his all-dancing film, Invitation to the Dance, at M.G.M.'s Elstree Studios. Conceived, directed and danced by himself, it consists of four separate ballets without any narraitve link—subjects include a circus, dances to popular songs, and a fairytale against cartoon backgrounds. Invitation to the Dance is a rare example of a contemporary film shot without a script—Kelly worked out his ideas first with the dancers, then rehearsed the choreography with the camera. Dancers appearing in the film, besides Kelly, include Toumanova, Claire Sombert, Serge Youskewitch, Belita and Alan Carter.



Above: Kelly directing a number with Freddie Young, director (Technicolor) photography.

Below: from the circus episode, with Gene Kelly, Claire Sombert, Alan Carter.





**Terminal** 



Above: a scene from the film. Below, left, de Sica rehearses Jennifer Jones, and, right, directs a scene with Jennifer Jones and Montgomery Clift.

An unusual combination of talent is represented on Terminal Station, directed and produced by de Sica, in collaboration with Selznick International, from a story by Cesare Zavattini, and starring Jennifer Jones and Montgomery Clift.

The story, all of which was shot in Rome's famous terminal station between the hours of midnight and dawn, tells of a married American woman who hesitates, during this time, between rejoining her husband in America and going with a young American-Italian living in Rome. Zavattini conceived the story two years ago, and interested a number Zavattini conceived the story two years ago, and interested a number of Italian directors in it; it was bought by the producer Salvo d'Angelo,





### Station

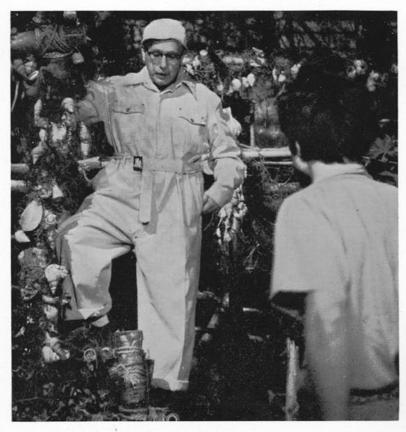
who planned for it to be made by Autant-Lara with Jennifer Jones and Gérard Philipe. This fell through, the rights were ceded to another producer, who replaced Philipe in his projected version by Marlon Brando, and a new screenplay was written by the novelist Moravia.

This again fell through, and the film acquired its present cast and director when David Selznick bought the story rights. Further changes have been made in the story, first by Zavattini and de Sica, then by a succession of American writers, including Carson McCullers, Paul Gallico, Truman Capote and Selznick himself. Capote finally bears the gradit for the American dislower. credit for the American dialogue.

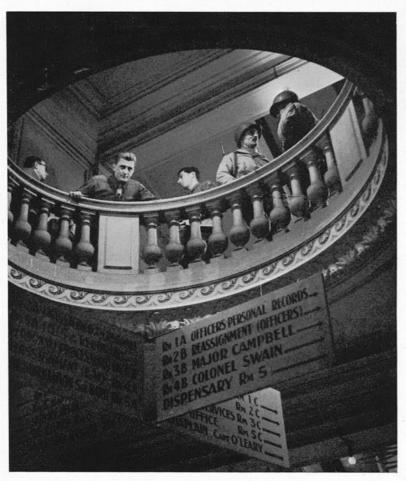




Above: a scene from the film. Below, left, de Sica rehearses his principal actors and, right, a scene being shot.



Above: von Sternberg directs a scene. Right: a scene with Akemi Negishi. Below: Kirk Douglas in "Somewhere in the World."



### Anatahan

In Japan, Josef von Sternberg has recently made his first completely independent film since The Salvation Hunters. Anatahan, which is based on a bizarre incident in the last war when 36 Japanese soldiers and one Japanese woman held out for two years on the island of Anatahan in the South Pacific, refusing to believe that the war was over and Japan defeated, was shot with a wholly Japanese cast and technical crew. Von Sternberg "discovered" Akemi Negishi, a young Japanese girl who has never before appeared on the screen, for the part of the one woman. (See also page 153).



### Somewhere in the World

This is the tentative title of a new film being made in Paris by Anatole Litvak. The story has been adapted by Irwin Shaw from a novel by Alfred Hayes, *The Girl on the Via Flaminia*, about an ex-G.I. who returns to postwar Europe, and the setting transposed from Italy to France.

The cast of this bilingual venture includes Kirk Douglas, Dany Robin, Serge Reggiani, Gabrielle Dorziat and Fernand Ledoux. The designer is the famous Trauner, the cameraman Armand Thirard, and Litvak's assistants are, on the floor, Sidney Chaplin and, for the American dialogue, Betsy Blair.





Early and late Vidor. Left, "Hallelujah!" (1929): right, Charlton Heston and Jennifer Jones in "Ruby Gentry" (1952).

# THE LATER YEARS: KING VIDOR'S HOLLYWOOD PROGRESS.

### Curtis Harrington

"I will not knowingly produce a picture that contains anything I do not believe to be absolutely true to human nature, anything that could injure anyone, nor anything unclean in thought or action. I will never picture evil or wrong, except to show the way to overcome it. It is my ambition never to produce a picture that my wife can't act in and my daughter can't see."

King Vidor, 1919, in PHOTOPLAY

King Vidor began his film directing career in 1918. Seven years later, when he was thirty-one, he directed a war film that, both in its critical and popular acclaim, won him a name among the top directors of Hollywood. Since then his career has wobbled fairly continuously between efforts to make films with a certain dignity and value, and films which are direct appeals to the most sentimental attitudes and predilections of the masses, with the larger number of them tending to be the latter. All of the films, however, are marked by a sure dramatic sense and an often inventive, though not strikingly original, use of the camera.

As we look back on his work from the present the films that he is most likely to be remembered for can be easily singled out. There is, first of all, the war film, The Big Parade (1925). Following this we can name The Crowd (1928), Hallelujah! (1929), Street Scene (1931), Our Daily Bread (1934), The Citadel (1938), and An American Romance (1944). If all of these were extraordinary it could be considered an impressive and important list; none of them, however, is quite first-rate. They are Vidor's best films and worthy of note because they have something of interest to communicate and do it well. They are most certainly above the run of the ordinary; but they do fall short of ranking with the best that America has produced (i.e., the finest work of Ford, Welles, Stroheim, Sternberg). What, precisely, they lack is the cohesiveness of style that a truly individual insight might give them; in every sense, the films are eclectic: there is neither a unity of theme nor a perceptible unity of style in them. Like William Wyler, Howard Hawks, William Wellman and others,

Vidor has made a number of good films by interpreting, often with vigour and perception, a variety of scripts dealing with various, disparate milieus. It would be difficult, however, to say, without first having seen the credit titles, "This, indeed, is a film by King Vidor!" They seldom bear their own trade-mark. They communicate some continuity of sympathies—a social awareness, a humane, sometimes passionate, response to the goodness of poor and simple people—and also of direct, unpretentious story-telling. Yet a distinct personality scarcely emerges from them. In perspective, though, *The Crowd*, with its portrait of an ordinary American clerk wanting a "place in the sun" but helplessly swallowed up in the anonymous mass of urban society, suggests something of an early confessional. It has, unlike the others, a desperate conclusion.

What interests us here particularly is Vidor's most recent work—that of a man fifty-nine years old with a full and, on the whole, profitable Hollywood career of thirty-four years behind him. Ironically enough—and the irony casts an odd reflection on Hollywood—his films over the last few years have begun to reveal a personality, so different and so unexpected, that it seems extraordinary now that the man who made, say, The Fountainhead, should ever have made Hallelujah! or The Big Parade. First it should be noted that, outside of his most remembered work, the subjects Vidor has most often treated have been either sentimental stories or episodes from the history of the American West. He has rarely attempted a comedy, never a farce. In the first category (most of these are "women's pictures" or "tear-jerkers") may be



Early sentiment. Hero and heroine of Vidor's "The Crowd" (1928).

mentioned Peg o' My Heart (1923), La Boheme (with Lillian Gish, 1926), The Champ (1931), Bird of Paradise (1932), The Wedding Night (1935), Stella Dallas (1937). The other group includes Billy the Kid (1930), The Texas Rangers (1936), and Northwest Passage (1940). The last film with which his name was prominently associated as being a work by King Vidor—that is to say a film which he himself chose to make, taking up the kind of social theme which had inspired his best early work—was An American Romance (1944). The story of the rise of a poor immigrant to the position of an industrial baron, it was a success neither with the critics nor the public; and for three years after it King Vidor did not make another film. Nearly three hours long, heavy, in parts sentimental and socially confused, it is interesting however for its massive industrial sequences; it explores almost rhapsodically a steel foundry, an aeroplane factory, and this concern with material power is to reappear later.

Whether this period of inactivity was chosen or forced upon him is difficult to say; it is, in any case, such a short retirement for a film director that it is no doubt without special significance (in the sense that he was probably not in real need of employment, which, if true, would mean a great deal to a study of his subsequent work). The important fact is that upon his return King Vidor directed a film that was in every way more spectacular, more sentimental, more artificial, more melodramatic-and certainly less genuine—than any he had ever directed before. The scenario for the film was written by its producer, David O. Selznick, which only partially suggests the extent of the control which he exerted over it. However, it was, if only in its finer details, the work of its director, for Duel in the Sun (1947) gives the distinct impression of being made by a man who has already made many films, must please a particular producer, and is just bored enough with his script to want to elaborate on it so as to provide a few harmless shocks.

Duel in the Sun contains every element imaginable. Technicolor photography (Josef von Sternberg was hired by Selznick to act as a photographic consultant for the film, but one wonders if his influence is anywhere actually visible in the completed work), luridly embellishing the already brilliant palette of America's western scenery, first sets the general key: the story relates how a white man kills his Indian wife and her lover, leaving the man's beautiful half-caste daughter to go and live with his sister, a sweet woman inhabiting a huge Western ranch with a cantankerous husband and one good, one bad son. The bad one inevitably seduces the half-caste girl but refuses to marry her. Hurt by this, she decides to marry another man and the bad son kills him. She finally meets the bad son again in an isolated canyon, swearing vengeance; she manages to shoot him, he manages to shoot her: they die

spectacularly together at last in a passionate, bloody embrace.

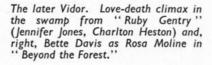
Few directors would have had the audaciousness to carry off the extremes of melodrama, sentimentality, and trumped-up passion that this film contains. Who but Vidor, for instance, would dare as late as 1947 to stage a scene reminiscent of Griffith at his most maudlin, by having Miss Lillian Gish, her hair streaming long below her waist, climb out of an enormous four-poster deathbed and fall at the feet of Lionel Barrymore, that now execrably mannerised actor, who, with tears pouring down his face, has been assuring her of his love? Despite its obviousness, the scene, by a certain justness of handling, by a refusal, clearly, to become embarrassed, does not move one to laughter. In direct contrast to this are the many scenes of violent passion, of strong physical lust: one remembers Jennifer Jones writhing tortuously on her bed, possessed by desire, and her wild-cat spring as she first accepts her lover with an open-mouthed kiss. And lastly, the fantastic "duel in the sun" itself, with the half-caste Indian girl bleeding profusely, crawling to her lover on her belly through the desert like a wounded snake. The film should be accorded its place as one of the purest works of "hokum" ever produced; one may ponder the significance of the fact that it is so highly placed on the list of the twenty greatest money-makers in the history of the cinema.

Duel in the Sun had no clear precedent in the work of Vidor. It represents a marked exaggeration, a decadence of the Western spectacle of The Texas Rangers, the sentimental tragedy of The Wedding Night. Within the relatively short retrospective view that we have, it appears as though Duel in the Sun served as a turning point, showing the way to a more stylised emphasis on melodrama, on the rawness of emotion, on the one-dimensional character. More than this, its pretentious "psychology," vulgarly faked passion and violence, are in direct contrast to the virtues of Vidor's earlier films, which could be accused of naïvety, of an excess of generous sentiment; but they were not slick, ostentatious, corrupted, as Duel in the Sun and its successors have increasingly been.

Two years elapsed between Vidor's next film and Duel in the Sun. It was awaited with great interest by the public because it was the filmisation of an extremely popular novel, "The Fountainhead," by Ayn Rand. The book had been called fascist in its sentiments by many: the story is a blunt plea for the absolute right of the superior individual to guide his destiny according to his own integrity, with no deference to the desire or well-being of society. The story is often said to have been derived from the life and character of the famous American architect Frank Lloyd Wright, who is, indeed, an outspoken and often irascible individualist. The fictional story of the book—and the film, the screen play of which was written by Miss Rand-relates the difficulties encountered by a young and handsome architect in getting his revolutionary designs accepted. When a housing project he has designed is contracted for, and construction started, his plans are changed by another architect to make them more acceptable in the eyes of the tradition-loving public and also to the commercial backers. Learning of this, the architect first pleads with the construction company to revert to his original designs; when they refuse he goes out and dynamites the project. Afterwards, he eloquently pleads his case in court and wins a favourable decision. The story also contains a carefully integrated sub-plot involving a powerful newspaper publisher and an oversexed female columnist, who expresses her desire for the architect by slashing his face with a whip, and helping him to dynamite the building.

Although this story might well have been approached





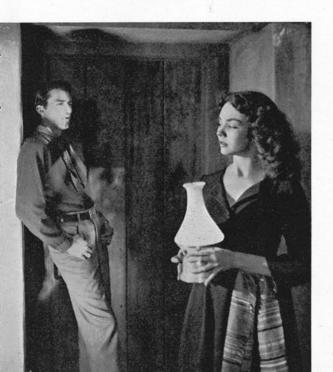


in a realistic, pedestrian manner, befitting the prose in which the original was written, it was instead made by Vidor into a stylised portrait of larger-than-life-size characters moving in a larger-than-life-size world. Even the photography, emphasising extremes of black and white, had a corresponding stylised quality to it. There was not a little suggestion here of the world of the future; moments reminded one visually of Cameron's Menzies' Things to Come. The publishing tycoon, played by Raymond Massey, is first seen hidden behind a round, modern black chair, facing a huge illuminated panel which traces the extent of his newspaper empire; and the office around him is very large and simply designed. Like such settings, the characters were simply designed, rather dehumanised, each guided by one overruling passion. In her first screen role, Patricia Neal, visibly unsure of herself, succeeded through a highly mannered performance in conveying sharply the two-dimensional "tempestuous" character she was required to portray. Only Gary Cooper, as the dynamic architect, was mis-cast, being too old and too phlegmatic for the part. The Fountainhead, quite often, bordered on the ludicrous; yet it contains, like Vidor's other recent efforts, a peculiar individuality and vitality that is not without fascination.

Upon completing The Fountainhead Vidor was assigned by his employers, the Bros. Warner, to direct a Bette

Davis vehicle. Another, though not so spectacular, best-selling novel was chosen as its basis, and Lenore Coffee was assigned to write the screenplay. The film was titled, like the book by Stuart Engstrand, Beyond the Forest. Probably the richest of Vidor's recent efforts, it was ignored by the critics and disliked by the public. After its original release, Catholic Legion of Decency pressure was brought to bear on it and two or three bits of dialogue and action were cut out. This fact was not given much publicity, however (which no doubt would have helped the film at the box-office), and in the two years that have elapsed since its release Beyond the Forest has no doubt been quite forgotten by almost everyone except, perhaps, the most ardent Bette Davis fans.

Sporting a long black wig which she employs to extravagant dramatic advantage, Bette Davis plays to the hilt the role of Rosa Moline, a small-town doctor's wife who is possessed by greedy, envious desires for bigger things than her present existence can provide. The similarity of this character and her situation to that of Emma Bovary is so obvious that I need not comment on it, except to point out that Rosa and her methods are strongly individualised and Americanised. The town Rosa lives in, called Fleming, is not too far from Chicago, the Big City for Rosa, the place where she can make her dreams come true. As the story begins, we learn that she has seduced,



The later Vidor: "fine grotesques..."
Characteristic sexual poses from (left)
"Duel in the Sun," with Gregory Peck
and Jennifer Jones, and (right) "The
Fountainhead," with Patricia Neal and
Gary Cooper.



unknown to her husband, a big-time industrialist, a tough self-made man (played by David Brian), who owns a hunting lodge in the country near Rosa's town. She is plotting to divorce her husband as soon as she can get the industrialist to propose marriage. He is reticent, however; she follows him to Chicago, where he informs her that he is planning to marry a young society girl. Believing her hopes ruined, Rosa returns to the small town and her forgiving husband, and presently learns that she is pregnant. She is happy about this at first, but one night the industrialist returns and tells her he has changed his mind and wants her after all, that she is "his kind of woman." A friend of Rosa's husband overhears their plans, and to prevent him from betraying her, Rosa shoots him on a hunting trip, making it look like an accident. She is acquitted, but because of the publicity resulting from the trial the industrialist decides to postpone the time that she should break with her husband. In a fit of anger she then tells her husband everything, and that she wants now to get rid of the baby. He is horrified, but determined at least not to be denied his child. He prevents Rosa from visiting an abortionist, but afterwards, by jumping out of their moving car, she forces him to perform the operation himself. While recovering from this she has a sudden relapse. She accidentally breaks a hypo-dermic syringe with necessary medicine in it, and while her husband goes out to get some more she rises feverishly from her bed with only one idea in mind; to get to Chicago, the Big City. In her delirium she dresses, applies make-up crazily, lurches, looking like a macabre prostitute, toward the train depot; within a short distance of the steaming train she falls dead.

Rosa is the kind of character one often encounters as the protagonist of the American "confession" story; only Rosa, contrary to the confession story formula, never, even at the end, sees the error of her ways. For this reason she is, in her consistency, rather magnificent, and her fate, due to the flaws in her character, rather than to any moral will of society, has the elements of genuine domestic tragedy. Bette Davis conveys Rosa's animal cleverness, her lack of taste and her corresponding pitiful longings for physical luxury in such a way as to move the spectator at times to genuine sympathy. There are many little Rosa Molines in the small towns of America, and the film, at its most obvious, serves as a kind of moral warning to these. But Vidor, through the same kind of creative exaggeration that he brought to his two previous films, seems to have gone beyond the local implication to a wider one. His Rosa Moline becomes a grotesque personification of the American materialist spirit; she is stripped of all moral restraint, desiring only, and with an overpowering vehemence, those precious fleeting realities of materialist success; money, position, physical

In its construction Beyond the Forest moves at a rapid pace that is sustained admirably throughout. The camera is always used tellingly, sometimes with great effectiveness to startle the audience, as when Rosa unexpectedly bursts into view at her trial to proclaim her innocence. A short impressionistic sequence excellently conveys Rosa's mounting hysteria at being alone in the streets of the Big City. Max Steiner, making liberal use of the theme song "Chicago," composed a score which suits the melodramatic content of the film perfectly, being at once more richly conceived and less sentimental than his usual hackneyed product. Lenore Coffee's script, a tight construction job performed on a meandering, badly structured novel, makes use of certain lines of dialogue which achieve a stronger effect in their transference to the screen. During an early sequence of the film the man she later kills says to Rosa, "You're something for the birds, Rosa. Something for the birds!" Later on, when Rosa lies restlessly on the porch swing of her house, with the town's blast furnaces in the distance behind her echoing her own burning, frustrated passions, she says, "If I don't get out of Fleming I'll just die! Living in Fleming is like waiting for a funeral to begin. No, it's like waiting in the coffin

for them to carry you out!"

After this film, the two succeeding ones look like parentheses, time-killers before an apotheosis. Lightning Strikes Twice (again scripted by Lenore Coffee) was a mystery about a man unjustly accused of murdering his wife, a contrived but uninteresting story to which Vidor appears occasionally to have applied characteristic trimmingsnotably a clever use of a desert locale. But again the general style and the acting were curiously exaggerated, tending towards a monstrous inflation. This was the last of Vidor's films for Warner Bros., and his next, Japanese War Bride, was made for an independent producer, Joseph Bernhard. An unconvincing domestic drama about the marriage of a returning American soldier and a Japanese girl, its treatment is very ordinary and demonstrates a talented director at his uninspired, commercial worst.

Vidor's most recent film, however, is replete with the same vitality that animated The Fountainhead and Beyond the Forest. Ruby Gentry tells the story of a girl (Jennifer Jones) from the wrong side of the tracks who loves a young man from the right side. Although he, too, loves Ruby, he marries to preserve his social position. Later Ruby becomes the socially despised wife of the small town's richest citizen. After she accidentally causes her husband's death, she inherits his money, discovers he had many debtors, and proceeds systematically to destroy everyone in the town who had snubbed her, culminating in a magnificent command to "Stop the pumps!" on the marsh reclamation project that her former lover has spent his career building up. But she still loves him, and in an anguished, mud-spattered love-death climax he is killed in her arms, in a swamp, by her religious-fanatic brother. In the years that follow Ruby is revealed as becoming a dry and lifeless woman, living on in selfpunishing loneliness, as a sea-captain.

Ruby Gentry is, again, filled with the stylised interpretive touches, the exaggerations that gave a special quality to The Fountainhead and Beyond the Forest. At one moment the lovers ecstatically drive along the sand at the edge of the ocean, finally abandoning their shiny automobile altogether to the waves. When Ruby becomes the avenger, she puts on dark glasses, giving to her countenance a peculiarly sinister, dark-angel quality. Throughout the film the sexual desires of the leading characters are strongly, feverishly emphasised—equally true in The Fountainhead and Beyond the Forest, as well, of course, as in the film that seems to have set the whole series off,

Duel in the Sun.

The circumstances under which all of these films were made (the early financial failure of Our Daily Bread made Vidor resolve never to put his own money into a film again) might be held to mitigate against their being taken as any clear-cut expression of their director's mentality. Still, it is Vidor who has "clothed the bones," as it were, of the scripts, and to the three most interesting of these films he has certainly contributed much more than the work-a-day talent he expended on the minor Japanese War Bride. Ruby Gentry, too, appears as a "Bernhard-Vidor Production," and its affinities with Beyond the Forest and The Fountainhead suggest that Vidor has been consciously aiming to express himself through these dramas.

For these films can be taken as a kind of trilogy of

(Continued on Page 203)

# THE STOCK SHOT HABIT

## William K. Everson

Today every large producing company has a library of "stock-shots" from which it borrows for its new pictures. This borrowing is not confined to actual events of the past, which, of course, can never be re-enacted. Nor to actual geographical places, to re-photograph which might require thousands of miles of travel. The use of stock for action sequences is becoming more and more a general practice, not only by independents and "quickie" producers, but also by the major companies, which frequently bolster their "B" and "nervous A" product with liberal helpings of footage from their own pictures of the past.

Usually the use of stock-shots cannot be detected. But when old footage is carelessly used, the differences between the old and new are obvious and disturbing. Sometimes the results are only ludicrous, sometimes they are chaotic. And there are occasions when one can be roused to fighting fury by the use of first-class familiar material to give

lustre to otherwise hackneyed and shoddy work.

A case in point is Red Snow, an inept little thriller about communist espionage in Alaska. The stars, Guy Madison and Carole Mathews, never left the studio sound-stage and actually occupy a very small percentage of the total footage. At least 60 per cent of the film consists of footage from the twenty-year-old Igloo. So well has the original negative been preserved, and so expertly have the new studio sets been matched up with the old footage (by back projection and blown-up stills), that except for a qualitative difference in the presentation, it is often difficult to distinguish old from new. To further the deception, the Eskimo actor Ray Mala, who starred in the original Igloo, was signed to play the lead in Red Snow. Incredible as it may sound, time had dealt so lightly with his face that a 1932 close-up could be followed immediately by a 1952 two-shot without giving the game away!

To add to the confusion of movie historians, the original *Igloo* has just been put into re-issue under the title *Chee-Ak the Mighty Hunter*, and its director, Ewing Scott, has just made a new Alaskan film, *Arctic Flight* (containing no stock-shots) which carries a plot-line almost

identical with that of Red Snow.

Boris Petroff, who produced *Red Snow*, is an old hand at this "creation" of new out of old. A year or so ago he obtained four ten-year-old Hal Roach films—all differing in theme, locale and time—and with the aid of backprojection equipment, a few cheap sets, and a stock company of "B" players (one of whom, Laura Elliott, has since achieved mild prominence at Paramount), turned out a little masterpiece called *Two Lost Worlds*. His story opened—in Australia—with liberal helpings of action footage from *Captain Fury*, and a few nice panoramic shots of grain fields from *Of Mice and Men*. Then his little band of adventurers survived all the storms and sea battles that *Captain Caution* could provide. Thereafter they arrived on a desert island where footage from Mr. Roach's *One Million B.C.* awaited them.

Roach's One Million B.C. awaited them.

This "pre-historic" footage, with its fights between monsters and its final volcanic eruption sequence, seems to have been made for the stock-shot merchants. Its sound-track is uncluttered by dialogue, and none of the original players (Mature, Landis, Chaney, etc.) are seen in anything but extreme long shots. Since Mr. Petroff's re-discovery of it, it has turned up with surprising rapidity,



The climax of "Stagecoach," which has reappeared intact in two recent B' westerns, "Laramie" and "I Killed Geronimo."

first in a Jungle Jim epic, and more recently in another independent quickie, Untamed Women, not yet released in New York. Even the Italians have got into the act—the first sequence from their Garden Spider is from One Million B.C.

Most of the Zane Grey Westerns released between 1930 and 1936 had been made before as silents. In many instances, notably *The Thundering Herd* and *Wagon Wheels*, the new versions were simply built around speeded-up footage from the old. *The Last Outpost* (1935) was shot around obviously ancient footage, and utilised very crude back projections for its elephant stampede and other effects.

A little later, in *Geronimo*, there were not only reels of silent footage, but large chunks from *Wells Fargo* and DeMille's *The Plainsman*. Last year, when the heavy in *The Redhead and the Cowboy* instructed his men to change clothes without any apparent reason (a tip-off, always, that stock is on the way), it became obvious that nobody was going to let *Wells Fargo* lie down and die. Once again Johnny Mack Brown and his troop of rebels attacked Joel McCrea's convoy of wagons. But this time, by means of cut-in close-ups, Glenn Ford and Rhonda Fleming got the credit for feats that were certainly not theirs.

This wholesale use of stock is largely limited to action subjects-primarily Westerns and jungle films, where stretches of uninterrupted long-shot action can be re-used en bloc. Outside these rather restricted fields, odd surprises crop up occasionally. I am still trying to figure out how scenes from La Bête Humaine found their way into a much later British film, Schweik's New Adventures. Or how the recent Swedish film The Talisman (not shown in the U.S., presumably because of a slight anti-semitic flavour) managed to obtain a reel or so of battle scenes from Gance's Napoleon. And to prove that nothing is sacred, some Pabst-directed film has turned up in a serial! Chapter one of a serial called Lost City of the Jungle, and succeeding chapters, are liberally embellished with material from *The White Hell of Pitz Palu*. And worse, Poirier's classic *Cain* was re-edited and fitted out with a melodramatic score plus plenty of inserted animals and native girls to make a sex-ploitation film called Rama, the Cannibal Girl.

Currently in re-issue under the title White Bride of the Jungle is an independent film originally known as Amazon Quest. Most of it is from a really fine pre-war German melodrama, Green Hell. Hans Nielsen, Gustav Diessl and the original German cast are in as much of it as are Tom Neal and Carole Mathews (the latter is often cast in films in which she merely acts to cans of old

material).

The Road to Bali, with a small cast and only one or two non-studio scenes, uses the wonderful squid from DeMille's Reap the Wild Wind, the tiger from Beyond the Blue Horizon, John Payne's schooner from Crosswinds, and a volcanic explosion from I can't remember

Walter Wanger's recent Joan of Arc seems to have been chopped up for stock already, presumably in an effort to recoup some of its losses. The battle scenes re-appeared a month or two ago in Sam Katzman's Thief of Damascus. Apparently Mr. Katzman thought that Gallic bowmen battling British soldiery in the Middle Ages wouldn't look too amiss in Eastern fantasy, especially if combined with further stock-shots of Oriental pageantry from Arabian Nights. I have just read the script of a forthcoming swashbuckler along Ivanhoe lines that takes place a hundred years before Joan of Arc's time, but in which Wanger's battle scene will be more or less intact. The first onslaught of the French troops, the withdrawal, the second attack-all are there. The only items deleted are the close-ups of Bergman and Ward Bond!

Horror films are almost as prolific users of stock-shots as Westerns. The Mummy's Hand and The Mummy's Curse, for example, each contained five minutes lifted out of Karl Freund's grand old chiller The Mummy. credits for Captive Wild Woman and Jungle Woman thanked Clyde Beatty for his co-operation in staging the wild animal sequences, but his co-operation was limited to not suing for the use made of footage from his much

older The Big Cage.

Most of today's jungle films-Tarzan, Bomba and Jungle Jim—would be quite hopelessly lost were it not for Trader Horn and Africa Speaks. The jungle just wouldn't be the same without that ancient shot of the flamingoes rising off the lake—or the vicious water buffalotiger fight. Congolaise (now re-titled Savage Africa) is a good example of the all stock-shot jungle film. It is made up of material from the old Martin Johnson films, some Belgian documentaries, and a few scenes shot on location in the wilds of New York. They were cleverly combined into a filmic record of a non-existent expedition which looked liked the real thing. In one sequence genuinely creative cutting transformed what was originally a playful family of three gorillas into a menacing herd of thirty or so beasts!

The real classic of all Jungle films is undoubtedly The White Gorilla, proudly bearing a 1945 copyright although at least 80 per cent is lifted from a silent serial (Perils of the Jungle). The new, connecting footage is limited to hopelessly phoney exchanges between two extras in gorilla skins; to vacuous conversation in a couple of cheap, cramped jungle sets; and to periodic close-ups of the hero peering through the under-brush at events that were filmed three decades ago! Not the least of the film's delights is its charming dialogue. Instructing his partner how to reach a hidden cave at least three days' march away, the hero merely says: "Turn left when you come to the elephant trail—you can't miss it!" The problem of what happens to the innumerable characters who wander through this stock-shot mélange is neatly disposed of. In the final sequence the white hunter staggers on to the set and explains calmly that everybody has been eaten by lions.

So far as I'm aware, the stock-shot fever has not infected other shores, except for mild, infrequent cases, like the Italian, British and Swedish films mentioned earlier. In the mid-'thirties the British used in The Clairvoyant much of Gaumont's The Tunnel. Four years ago an independent British distributor bought Shark Woman from an American agent. It is a pleasing documentary

by no means as lurid as its title. Having exhausted its normal exhibition expectancy, this young British distributor wrote a new framing story, dumped most of Shark Woman into the middle, and with this "brand new" British film secured a booking for the complete Odeon circuit. And he then sold his "new" creation to the American agent who had sold him Shark Woman in the first place!

Inevitably, though, it is the Western that absorbs stock footage most easily and in the largest quantity. Colorado Territory, for example, contained an action sequence from Cheyenne, complete even to the riding close-ups of Arthur Kennedy and Tom Tyler, which, of course, gave the game away completely. More recently still, much of Dodge City turned up in Fort Worth, and Valley of the Giants was resurrected for The Big Trees, a partial remake. Barricade, as a very much altered re-make of The Sea Wolf, presented something of a problem. The final showdown was distinguished, however, by the presence of Errol Flynn and others from Montana, of Tim Holt leaping his horse over a gate from Gold Is Where You Find

It, and of sundry other "guest stars."

The big landrush sequence from Cimarron turns up regularly. Gene Autry and Charles Starrett couldn't make a move without the Indian and cattle stampede footage from Arizona. The big action-sequences from Wagons Westward and In Old Oklahoma are familiar enough by now. Any fight between two horses usually falls back on the old (1932) Mascot serial The Devil Horse. The simple shot of a stationary train in Utah came from Autry's Home on the Prairie of ten years earlier. When espionage agents escape in Valley of Hunted Men, everybody from Gene Autry to Buck Jones was mixed up in the pursuing posse. A current Western, Old Oklahoma Plains, borrows lavishly from the Preston Foster-Madge Evans film, Last of the Cavalry.

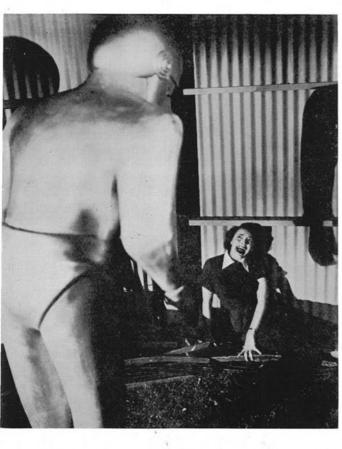
Ever-rising costs of production necessitate drastic economies by small-time producers—though perhaps none more drastic than those employed by the makers of a recent series of Lash LaRue Westerns. Here the producers merely utilised an entire series of old LaRue films, and restricted their new footage to short scenes filmed in a studio.

If absolutely necessary to ensure continuity, a couple of players who appeared in the original footage are reemployed for additional scenes, though careful scripting usually avoids this. In The Vanishing Outpost, for example, the villain Reed Howes is conveniently shot in the newly-filmed studio sequences. "My brother will take over in the raid tomorrow," he explains blandly, thus leaving the way clear for the use of a 10-minute stock sequence in which Jack Ingram plays the villain. Most of the recent Charles Starrett Westerns have been built around stock. This is a relatively simple matter, however, for Starrett has appeared in the same garb throughout the entire series, and battled the same villains for years.

The current Apache War Smoke has a good sprinkling of footage from Ambush and Apache Trail, of which it is a partial re-make. Edward Small's Iroquois Trail and Indian Scout are both built around footage from his earlier films, Last of the Mohicans and Kit Carson. Much of John Ford's wonderful Stagecoach has recently turned up in two Westerns, Laramie and I Killed Geronimo. Both of them contained the climax of the chase across the salt flats-complete.

Occasionally the use of the stock-shot results in a real howler. The best one, I think, occurred in The Kid from Broken Gun. Its juvenile lead (Jack Mahoney) also appeared in the stock sequences—as one of the heavies!

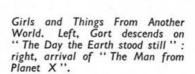
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# GLIMPSES OF THE MOON

Science Fiction

Penelope Houston





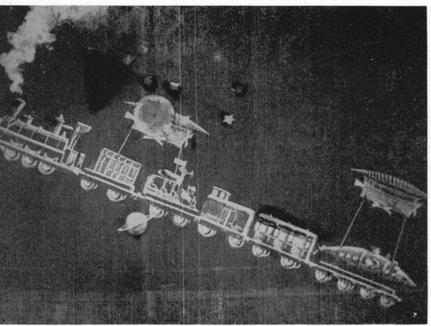
When, in 1950, the Hayden Planetarium in New York announced, none too solemnly, that it would take bookings for voyages to the moon, 25,000 people from all over the world hastened to apply. And a few weeks ago the Daily Express carried a story about an air hostess whose preparations are apparently well advanced. The journey, she was quoted as saying, would last only about nine and a half hours, but "I shall have to take along lots of pills and sedatives. . . . After all, one never knows how people will react on such an expedition." The American public, through the comic strips and the pulp magazines, the Martian fantasies of Ray Bradbury and the prognostications of rocket experts such as Dr. Von Braun, has been doing its best to find out. Like most fashions, this one took a little time to cross the Atlantic, but it has certainly arrived, and not only on the bookstalls. Angus Wilson has reviewed science fiction in a Sunday paper and, in the unfrivolous columns of the New Statesman, a Science Fiction Book Club advertises itself. Dons and bishops, long the main support of the thriller industry, may soon turn their attentions to the world of rocket ships, space guns and moon men.

The cinema's own history of inter-planetary excursions dates back fifty years, when Méliès' voyagers set off jauntily and quite unscientifically on their Trip to the Moon. Thirty years later, H. G. Wells' Things to Come ended its glum inventory of the materialistic paradise with an exploration by rocket. And to the serials science fiction is old stuff. In 1938 Flash Gordon went to Mars to investigate "a strange force drawing nitrogen from the earth's atmosphere," and there encountered Azura, Queen of Magic, and Ming, Emperor of Mongo. Heroes such as Bruce Gentry, Captain Video and the invincible Superman, who have their origins in American radio or television

programmes, have long been defending the U.S.A. against such menaces as a high-explosive flying disc, an armoury of atomic weapons controlled by Atom Man, or a mysterious and undefined plot to take control of the universe. Thermal guns, strato-sleds, jetmobiles, cosmic vibrators, atomic eyes and stratosphere vehicles— whatever these may be—are the commonplaces of this universe of juvenile fantasy.

But it was only about three years ago that science fiction moved into the world of the feature film, when Universal-International announced that George Pal, previously known for his puppet films, was to produce Destination Moon. At once the small Lippert Company, makers mainly of low budget thrillers and westerns, went into action with another inter-planetary story, Rocketship XM, and won the race to the screen in a photo-finish.

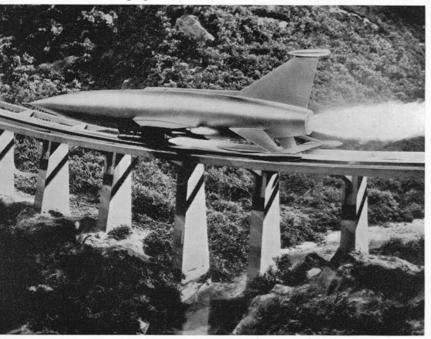
As tradition demands, the five scientists of Rocketship XM set off for the moon, but they never reached it. The details of fuel supply were entrusted to a Miss Van Horn, who made some miscalculation—she was forgiven, she was only "momentarily being a woman"-and, after hurtling directionless through space at 25,000 miles an hour, the expedition found itself in the vicinity of Mars. "Mars! What do you know?" exclaimed the scientists, as a rather dismal looking globe loomed up through the port-hole. Here, in a magenta tinted sequence, they wandered about in their space suits, dug up traces of a lost civilisation (" the mind that conceived this must have been of a high order of civilisation," their leader conjectured, unearthing some relic from the sand), concluded that Mars had destroyed itself by atomic warfare, and beat a hasty retreat, bombarded by rock-throwing Stone Age Martians. Miss Van Horn slipped up again, and the rocket crashed. The film was notable for rushed and



Two rockets to the unknown. Above, Méliès' apparatus in "Voyage Across the Impossible" (1904) and, below, the rocket of George Pal's "When Worlds Collide" (1951).

inexpert execution, a wild lack of concern with scientific plausibility and some enjoyably inept dialogue.

Destination Moon was an altogether more serious proposition. The purpose of its expedition was patriotic rather than exploratory: the moon, after all, has possibilities as a military base, and "others" must not be allowed to steal this particular march. The rocket, equipped with intricate gadgets, seemed more professional than the ill-fated Rocketship XM, while the scientific formulæ so casually tossed off by the rocketeers sounded reasonably likely. On arrival, the leader hastened to stake claim to the derelict and uninviting terrain: "By the grace of God and in the name of the United States, I take possession of this planet for the benefit of mankind." But, after this imperialistic gesture and a little prospecting with a geiger counter, the crew became nervous about the



return journey. Destination Moon's brightest sequence was the rescue of a man overboard in space. For the rest, it presented a view of space travel which scientists and astronomers apparently found not unacceptable.

The voyage home seems the great problem in screen space travel. A second feature, Monogram's Flight to Mars (inhabitants: American speaking Martians, including girls whose appearance seemed copied from the more enterprising type of cinema usherette; furnishings: metal and cardboard) suggested that the Martians were anxious to steal the expedition's rocket as a prototype for their own fleet with which to invade the earth. In true serial style, the flyers made their getaway with one of the usherettes.

A wilder and more apocalyptic imagination revealed itself in George Pal's second Technicolor adventure, When Worlds Collide. This film conjured up two new planets, Zyra and Bellus, hurtling towards the earth; Zyra would flash past, leaving a trail of such minor mishaps as floods, earthquakes and eruptions; Bellus would hit head on, bringing the world to an end. The film dealt with the construction of a Noah's Ark rocket, to transport a selected forty to start a new world on Zyra. After the customary scientific double-talk, arguments and selfsacrifice as to who was to go, a riot by those left behind, and the rather unfair jettisoning of the selfish capitalist who had paid for the rocket, the lucky forty, apparently hand-picked from the chorus and the football field, stepped on to Zyra and into a cheap travel poster landscape. When Worlds Collide had some fun with model shots of New York engulfed by a tidal wave, but the end of the world found Hollywood principally concerned with whether the "devil-may-care airman" or the "fine, capable young doctor" would get the girl.

Space travel became a two-way proposition with the arrival on earth of such creatures as The Man from Planet X, The Thing from another World and Klaatu (The Day the Earth Stood Still). The Man from Planet X was a stunted, malevolent little figure, wearing a kind of diving suit hung about with elaborate gadgets, who landed from his spaceship in the middle of a fogbound Scottish moor, the home of a scientist, his daughter and an intrepid young American. "I know you are not given to hysteria, but your statements have a tinge of fantasy," the scientist irritably complained to his daughter, when told of this apparition. The Man, however, turned out to be the advance guard of invasion forces from Planet X. His curious purpose was to build up a fifth column by enslaving the local peasantry. Scotland Yard, the army and the American put a stop to these schemes, after skirmishes so absurd as to be almost engaging.

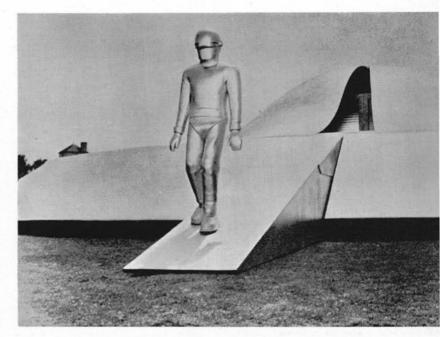
Howard Hawks' The Thing from Another World was somewhat grandiosely described by its producer as an example of fiction "based on the unknown but possible, and made possible by the use of known and proven scientific facts." The Thing so made possible was certainly ingenious in conception: a creature of superhuman mental ability, eight feet tall, composed of vegetable matter, indestructible, able to reproduce itself at lightning speed and nourishing itself on a diet of human blood. It arrived by outsize flying saucer in the Arctic, where it had the bad luck to run into an American expedition. Unfortunately, after the encouraging build-up, The Thing turned out to be an old acquaintance from the Frankenstein-Dracula days—a large man in a tin suit,

advancing menacingly but jerkily upon his victims. The Thing belonged less to the machine-made world of science fiction than to the older traditions of the horror story, but it lacked inventiveness and a proper zest for the outrageous. After some moderately chilling preliminaries, the juvenile took charge.

That Things, whatever their intentions, have reached a stage of mechanical civilisation far in advance of earth is a basic rule in science fiction. The Day the Earth Stood Still introduced a new and rather alarming prospect: that of inter-planetary diplomacy. The elegant ambassador was, it is true, accompanied by a bodyguard of the more traditional type, a tin-suited, heavily mechanised creature named Gort. Klaatu (Michael Rennie) landed in Washington from his high-powered flying saucer, delivered his ultimatum—a demand from space for world peace—to an assembly of scientists, and took off again in his gleaming aircraft. The idea was certainly workable, but the film, directed by Robert Wise, scarcely explored its possibilities; the mixture of the semi-serious with the opportunist pursuit of thrills added up to a second-rate concoction.

After such reconnaissance expeditions, the Martians landed in full force in George Pal's third production, The War of the Worlds. Taking its title, but not very much more, from H. G. Wells, this story of inter-planetary invasion found its impetus mainly in the more specific fears of the 1950's. The Martians arrived in vast, meteorlike flying machines, from which emerged sinister little aircraft equipped with atomic heat rays of pulverising force. No previous screen venture into science fiction had devised such ingeniously alarming objects as these swanshaped machines, with their menacing, gliding progress, the metallic ticking and hissing that accompanied it, and the uncoiling, snaking movements of their heads. The search of a cottage by one of these things, the probing and peering of its electronic eve, made a genuinely frightening sequence. Bombs, bullets and finally the atom bomb were expended to no purpose against the Martian armaments and a miracle—though one capable of a logical explanation—had to be invoked to check the invasion. That the operation of natural laws rather than scientific or military skill should halt the Martians perhaps emphasises a contemporary attitude: science cannot be trusted, it works more strongly for the other side. Though the story very properly confined itself to the defence of Los Angeles-including Hollywood?-the film had montage sequences of world-wide destruction, and some scenes of mass evacuation and hysteria seemed to derive from a real war scare rather than from its own fantasy. War of the Worlds set out, a good deal more effectively than The Thing, to alarm. The horror story, 1953 model, depends not on the limited powers of the man-monster, but on the massive, implacable destructive forces of the machine.

I have already written in SIGHT AND SOUND of the weirdest, not to say most demented, venture into this field, Red Planet Mars, which imagined that radio transmissions of the Sermon on the Mount from Mars would bring about a timely Russian revolution and world peace. Another eccentric piece of work was Five, produced and directed by Arch Oboler, who has since turned his attentions to the third dimension and Bwana Devil. The five, the last people left alive after the earth was swept by some cataclysmic atomic disaster, were an ill-assorted lot, including a half-baked young idealist, a Fascist, a Negro,



Two way travel—Above: arrival of Gort in "The Day the Earth Stood Still". Below: the voyage to Zyra. Travellers seeking safety by rocketing to a new planet in "When Worlds Collide".

and a hysterical woman. Their squabbles, conducted with the uneasy solemnity of a school debating society, were interrupted by a cleverly shot sequence of the return to a city in which life had suddenly and drastically stopped, but the film arbitrarily killed off three of its characters and left the idealist and the woman to face a uniquely uninviting future. Fear of disaster was the motive force of *Unknown World*, an abysmal little B picture in which a group of scientists, with the inevitable girl, decided to escape from atomic warfare by finding a refuge beneath the earth's surface. A voyage of 1,600 miles down in a tank-like machine named a cyclotram convinced them that even the atom bomb was less alarming than the subterranean, and they managed to surface conveniently close to a tropical island.

Further fantasies on their way include Spaceways, the



first, belated British entry into the field, and United Artists' *The Magnetic Monster*. By "bombarding an isotope with alpha particles," a scientist has created a new, radio-active element which doubles its size every eleven hours and so threatens to destroy life on earth. The "largest deltatron in the world," however, puts paid to this Wellsian monster. *Time* magazine describes the film as "up to the minute and quasi-scientifically hair raising."

That only one of these films (The Day the Earth Stood Still, with Michael Rennie and Patricia Neal) has employed recognised stars is perhaps scarcely surprising: no one would want to play second lead to an eight-foot intellectual carrot or a magnetic monster. That no top-line writers or directors have interested themselves in the fashion was perhaps also to be expected: science fiction on the screen is not well connected. But from H. G. Wells to George Orwell, from the clinical horrors of Brave New World to the chilling fantasies of The Silver Locusts, writers have entered this particular world of the imagina-

to reflect a society living too close to the edge of hysteria. But in itself science fiction is only a minor symptom, and Hollywood's adventures only a small part of that; the flying saucer legends, even the sixteen-year-old panic brought about by Orson Welles' famous War of the Worlds broadcast, seem to cut a good deal nearer the bone. Perhaps a more significant implication is to be found in the whole attitude to science itself. The old-style wicked scientist, part alchemist, part witch doctor, who spent his time manufacturing death rays, turning men into apes or apes into men, has become a somewhat demodé figure. Human agency now counts for little and the rocket, the atomic weapon, the electronic gadget, the cybernetics brain machine-expressions of science considered almost as an abstraction-have taken charge. One may conjecture that superstition, the exposed nerve of society on which the horror film played in its time, is now bound up for most of us with this alarming apparatus.

The territory open to science fiction encompasses both





Visions of destruction. Left, a tidal wave engulfs New York in "When Worlds Collide". Right, a Martian machine pulverises Los Angeles by heat ray in "The War of the Worlds."

tion. On the screen, we have been given adventures too silly—with the exception of War of the Worlds and, possibly, Destination Moon—to alarm or entertain and, in The Day the Earth Stood Still and Five, fables excessively concerned with sanctimonious moralising. Characters, for the most part, should be returned to the world of the comic papers, where their thoughts at least would remain unspoken.

It would be easy to interpret the current fashion in the darkest colours. Such emphasis on destruction, atomic disaster, the end of the world, on "watching the skies" (you never know when a Thing may land), may well seem

horror and fantasy; it can find its impetus, as did the unappetising Utopia of *Things to Come*, in technological advance, or it can send its adventurers off into space on flights as imaginatively peopled as the charts of the medieval world. One does not mind if space travel oversteps the bounds of the scientifically likely, provided that it does so with imagination. But Hollywood is perhaps not the starting point for such journeys. The shiny, gadget-crammed rocket is dispatched into a universe that comes straight out of the comic strips, and the Brooklyn boy or the chorus girl, greeting a new planet with a "Gee! We're here!" scarcely seem fitted for the traditions of Columbus.

# COWBOY, PIONEER AMERICAN SOLDIER

## Herbert L. Jacobson

Traditions are self-perpetuating because of their influence on the conduct of the generations which inherit them. A people who were conquerors in a past epoch but are so no longer, are often brought up to think of themselves as conquerors still, with results usually more disastrous to themselves than to their enemies. By the same token a people with a long tradition of tranquillity like to think of themselves as perpetually peaceful—even though they may be engaging in an aggressive war.

The net effect of the cowboy tradition on the American mind has been to perpetuate the memory of a closed epoch into times when it has once again served as a real necessity. The seemingly miraculous transformation of the U.S. in two world wars from a people with practically no army and a buried, though glorious, military tradition, into a crushing military power, is due in no small part to the combative spirit kept alive in her youth by the cowboy tradition, itself constantly reflected in the American cinema.

The frontier was closed about 1890 with the occupation of all free arable land. Until that time genuine pioneer activity still continued in some parts of the West. The cowboy movie, which fixed this tradition for posterity, did not get started until a generation later. It owed its start less to an interest in the fundamental problem of pioneering, the opening of new lands, than to the discovery that a man on a galloping horse was cinematographically interesting, while blazing guns provided the essential element of a drama, the struggle. The horses galloped and the heroes fired not for land but for abstract concepts of Justice and Honour, e.g. the ritual duel to the death as the automatic answer to a refused offer of a drink.

The pioneer, the type which actually made the West, had less dramatic appeal than the cowboy who sprang up later as if to answer the call of Hollywood. More pioneers died of dysentery than of Indian arrows or one another's bullets: a screen cowboy could only die by homicide, which is much more romantic, both for the audience and himself.

The activities of the screen cowboy offered more opportunity for action than that of the peaceful farmer or cattleherder, which was what the pioneer automatically became once he reached his promised land. The classical defence of the homestead about to be foreclosed by the mustachioed villain may at first seem to be a contradiction of this thesis of a fundamental disinterest in the land, since the mortgage was on land. But anyone who had been to a Western more than once knew that the mortgage never would be foreclosed, and that its only raison d'être was to provide the hero with an excuse to ride and fight. The deed had become a stage prop, with a purely symbolic value; its relation to the land was completely forgotten. Even in current Western movies, in which the background of the fixed pastoral community is given more recognition, the hero usually remains an outsider defending that community, a guide, a scout, a soldier, or even a saddle tramp (cf. Saddle Tramp, Two Flags West, Only the Valiant, Santa Fe), so that he can preserve the freedom of action essential to his dramatic rôle.

It was not until The Covered Wagon in 1923 that the

real emotive force of the great Westering movement, land hunger, was adequately dealt with, and this film, while it enjoyed an enormous success, did not influence many others in its own time, despite the cross-fertilization process by which Hollywood breeds one film from another. The emphasis on the land drive is, on the other hand, a characteristic of the current renaissance of the Western (cf. Wagonmaster).

This may be attributed partly to the creation in the interim of well-equipped research departments in the various movie studios, which tend to follow history more than fantasy, and partly to the search for fresh arrangements of an old theme on the part of new writers a generation removed from the historical distortions of the

pioneer movement in the early Westerns.

Be that as it may, the Western, in one form or another, has helped to keep alive in America a tradition which must be called military. Calling it that does not, however, eliminate many constructive aspects of the overall military concept, among them initiative, persistence, and, in general, the exercise of will-power toward positive ends.

Before World War II, when the U.S.A. had a ridiculously small army of 125,000, and when military training was frowned on by most Americans as practically an act of aggression in itself, this cowboy tradition helped keep alive the military spirit, which twice in a generation saved the country from domination by an autocracy bred on a Teutonic warrior tradition, featured in German movies.

It will be asked how the classic individualism of the cowboy could have contributed much to the kind of mass machine that the American army appeared as in Europe and in Asia. This question arises from a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of the American soldier. Of course he is part of a gigantic machine. But it was originally created not by other machines, but by individuals full of inventiveness, such as the cowboy, always fighting against the unexpected. This inventiveness was necessary for survival. And behind the cowboy myth is the historical figure of the pioneer, pitted against nothing less than the whole of a gigantic and violent nature, and depending for the very food he must eat on a tremendous application of initiative. Other nations have natural resources equal to America's, Russia and Brazil, for example; but it is the application of individual initiative, multiplied by millions of men, that has made America so much more powerful.

That there was a collective element in this movement, no one will deny. The wagon trains were collective and so, often, were the house-raisings and the harvestings. But in the last analysis the land was too vast to breed a sense of mutual dependence. When the house was up, a man and his family alone had to protect it and the harvest from marauding Indians, too often without the last-minute succour by a band of white men which is a standard feature of the cowboy film. The history of the West is full of stories of lone women who, together with the children old enough to hold or, at least, to load a rifle, held off Indian attacks for sleepless days and nights before their men arrived to save them—if ever.

To return to the American soldier, who is a product of this tradition, as perpetuated and refined in the cowboy film. Just what characteristics distinguish him from the soldiers of the rest of the world? For one thing, marksmanship with a rifle, a powerful creator of self-confidence. Americans are among the world's best mass marksmen. And this despite the fact that half of them come from urban areas where not even hunting rifles exist. (The city gangster films, the great rival of the cowboy film for the hearts of youth, might create the impression that a vast amount of practice in firearms is available in the cities. But although a considerable amount of internecine war-

fare did take place in New York and Chicago in the Prohibition era, probably more shells were fired on Hollywood screens than in all the rest of the U.S. combined, and, as the recent Senate crime investigation revealed, the contemporary gangster now relies more on cartel zoning organization than crude force.) American marksmanship must, therefore, be credited to something other than practice, perhaps to a conscious struggle to live up to the straight-shooting traditions of the movie cowboy.

It has been frequently commented that the American soldier fights well despite a burning lack of conviction in a cause, contrary to all the precepts of morale-builders. There are many factors which could be called upon to explain this, but one which is usually neglected is that he does have a strong ésprit de corps, based partly on his picture of himself as the heir to a do-or-die cowboy tradition. The stubborn and successful American resistance in the murderous Battle of the Bulge and in the Korea encirclement were partly the end result of a conviction, nourished by cowboy films, that the good hero always wins if he holds out long enough. The cause for which the American soldier will burn is his self-respect as an unbeatable individual, grounded in a history of which the cowboy tradition is a living part, and this has been too frequently underestimated by movements which could recognise no potential heroism except a mass-inspired one like their own.

There may seem to be little relation between the manto-man, barlength battles of the cowboy and that of the modern soldier, who frequently does not even see the men who are trying to eliminate him—sometimes from the other side of a mountain, or even from high up in the air. The increased mechanisation of warfare inevitably tends to eliminate the personally delivered blow against the enemy. Nevertheless a form of compensation, of a return to the cowboy tradition of lone struggle, has been created anew, paradoxically in the newest and most mechanical of the

forms, the air force. No muddy infantryman who ever saw a nattily-dressed pilot dismounting triumphantly from his winged horse ("Didn't have time to change in and out of a flying suit. Got a heavy date waiting for me in town.") will ever get over the envy inspired by this latest version of the cowboy. He rides in the skies instead of being silhouetted against them; his trusty horse is served by dozens of men, some of whom even fly and shoot with him. But in the end, like the leader of a band of cowboys, it is he alone on whose individual skill and courage the outcome depends.

It was no accident that the renaissance of the cowboy film took place during and immediately after World War II. And as America girds herself against the possibility of another great struggle, it is not surprising that the frequency of these films, which reflect and nourish her picture of herself as a successful defender of high ideals,

has been stepped up.

A final thought occurs on the sudden appearance of good Indians in a number of these films, Broken Arrow, Devil's Doorway, Comanche Territory, Battle of Powder River, Across the Wide Missouri, and most notably, perhaps, the character of the noble old Indian chief Ponythat-Walks in She Wore a Yellow Ribbon. Can it be that this is a genuine reflection of a greater respect for the sometimes different point of view of the rest of the world, of whom so many peoples are coloured? If so, it presages well for prospects of peace, which depend so largely on American patience. For the cowboy, though violent once in action, is never the aggressor, and is moved to take up his guns only by injustice. Recognition that his quick sense of justice must be tempered by the different interests and outlook of other men may well be a first step toward being able to hang up his guns for good. But if, despite his efforts to hold his fire while the peace-pipe is being passed, the truce is treacherously broken, there won't be enough tables to dive under once he draws.

#### The Seventh Art

Joan Crawford will be starred in Paramount's *Lisbon*, an exciting drama of intrigue and romance. She has the part of a wealthy woman who goes to Lisbon in a desperate attempt to free her husband, a prisoner behind the Iron Curtain. There she meets a rugged sea-faring American adventurer. The part calls for Miss Crawford to wear one of the most fabulous wardrobes ever screened. (*The Star.*)

"I laughed heartily for the first time in weeks." (Daily Worker review of "The Mister Magoo Show.")

All of the famous South Seas paintings of Paul Gauguin—from his "Tahitian Mountains" to his studies of the natives of Tahiti and the Marquesa—will be used as background inspiration for the sets of Miss Sadie Thompson, Columbia Pictures' Technicolor version of the Somerset Maugham classic starring Rita Hayworth. (Press Release.)



Advertisement for "Because of You," with Jeff Chandler, Loretta Young.

PARENTS. The News is Edited to omit Atomic and other Horrors during the Disney Season. (Notice outside Cameo Cinema, Charing Cross Road.)

It should be comparatively easy to rig up a guillotine in your lobby. . . . (Exploitation Campaign Sheet for "Monte Cristo—Masked Avenger.")

The show-stealer is Tinker Bell, Peter Pan's lustrously blonde playmate. On the stage, Tinker Bell has usually been depicted as a flicker of light. (In the earlier movie version, she was an automobile headlight bulb with a fluttery movement on the end of a fishing pole.) Through the magic of the animated cartoon, she is a bosomy little vamp, not much bigger than a dot of light, who flits about enchantingly with a silvery tinkle of bells in a sprinkle of golden pixie dust. (Time Magazine review of "Peter Pan.")

# THE RELUCTANT AUDIENCE

# Arthur Knight

The popular theory that Hollywood produces films for everybody has lately been coming in for considerable reevaluation. Groups sensing slights and slurs in current productions have grown increasingly vocal, while in The Great Audience Gilbert Seldes has argued ably that the mass for which Hollywood constantly claims it produces is in fact simply a mass minority, that it represents perhaps a fifth of the total population of this country. Further, he emphasises, the portion of the population that most movies do attract is in the nine to nineteen age group. Older people, more mature people, generally steer away from the picture theatres, going to movies only occasionally—or not at all.

There have been certain signs and portents, however, that this audience is not completely lost to films. Just after the war, when British pictures descended on the United States in considerable quantities, there began a tremendous expansion in the foreign language houses, the so-called "art theatres." (Productions from Europe, lacking familiar star names, have generally been sold as "art.") Theatres in the larger cities that experimented with this specialised policy soon found it paid off handsomely. Managers discovered that they were attracting a whole new audience, one that could not be brought in by stars and glamour, an audience whose concern was rather

for story values and maturity of theme.

The fact that such pictures as I Know Where I'm Going and Quartet often ran for many months in New York gave them an additional prestige in the eyes of theatre operators throughout the country. The number of "art houses"—or at least theatres that would show an "art film" with fair regularity—has jumped in the past six years from a scant dozen to over 450. Now Hollywood itself is beginning to see this light. In recent months such pictures as The River, Red Badge of Courage and Face to Face, films whose survival in the mammoth Broadway showcases would be problematical, have all been booked into these smaller "art theatres" for extended runs. Here it is the houses themselves that have created the audience, promising their patrons certain standards of intelligence and art-and at present promising the film producers a modest return on what is frequently a fairly modest in-

The idea of going out and building an audience for a specific picture, however, is still a new one on the American movie scene. Hollywood producers seem to prefer their long-cherished notion that everybody likes to go to the movies and, since pictures are better than ever, all you have to do is place a couple of ads. in some of the mass-circulation national weeklies, arrange chatty radio interviews with the female star, announce which is the lucky theatre that has been chosen to play this fabulous attraction-and wait for the crowds to gather. These days, when the crowds fail to put in their expected appearance, the trouble is always television.

But just as the British imports of a few years back pointed to the creation of a certain audience for a specific theatre, so the special handling that United Artists gave to Olivier's Henry V has indicated a way to create capacity audiences for a specific film. Paul Lazarus, Jr., then Director of Advertising and Publicity for United Artists, is quite blunt on this point. "If we had handled *Henry V* as if it were just another big picture," he said recently, "we'd be dead. We knew that there was nothing here for regular movie audiences. But we knew we did have something for the devotees of the legitimate theatre and

for all cultural-minded people throughout the country.

That was the audience we had to reach."

Lazarus planned his exploitation campaign for Henry V every bit as carefully as Henry planned his own campaign against the French. He handled the picture not as if it were a film at all but, in his own words, "a touring company of the play starring Sir Laurence Olivier." He conscientiously avoided the routine and the obvious. A theatrical Press agent, a man who had no previous connection with motion pictures, was assigned to do the advance promotion work. The Theatre Guild was secured as sponsor, with its lists of playgoers all over the United States. Whenever possible, the distributors rented a legitimate theatre in preference to an ordinary movie house. In April of 1946, Henry V was premiered in Boston, in a playhouse just across from hallowed Symphony Hall. In June it opened in New York, the first film ever to play at the mammoth City Center Theatre. Slowly, Henry V began to build its audience.

Shortly after the picture was launched, Lazarus brought in Howard E. Kohn II, another man with no previous motion picture experience. Kohn, who has since handled The Titan, Cyrano de Bergerac and the recent art film Pictura, was first assigned the task of travelling through the country and interesting cultural institutions in his picture, getting their support and patronage for showings of the film in their communities. Local newspaper ads. were held down to the small boxes customary for legitimate stage presentations; the audience was won by direct appeal to those groups and organisations that could be expected

to support such an attraction.

Bethlehem, Pa., was Kohn's first assignment, a notoriously tough theatrical town. "If those coal-miners take it," reasoned Lazarus, "it will go anywhere." The Bethlehem exhibitor, a veteran of many years in the movie business, was sceptical, convinced that any special attempts to sell the picture were merely waste motion. Posters, radio and newspaper ads., hotel lobby announcementsthis was all perfectly proper procedure. Perhaps they might even have someone dressed in knight's armour ride a white horse through the streets of Bethlehem carrying

banners to announce the new picture.

This kind of "special exploitation," so dear to the hearts of most theatre managers, Kohn ruled out completely. Instead, he went directly to the Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce, an organisation of the key business people in the community. To them he explained, quite frankly, that Bethlehem had been chosen as a test run for a picture that had received high praise in Boston and New York but which was as yet an unknown quantity in the small towns. To be successful, to encourage the production of more such pictures, Henry V would have to do business in the hinterland as well as in the great metropolitan centres. Would the Chamber of Commerce be willing to

The Chamber readily accepted the challenge. Indeed, they said it was precisely the sort of thing they wanted to do, to promote the cultural and business life of their city. The secretary immediately arranged interviews for Kohn with the heads of the two colleges in Bethlehem, Lehigh University and the Moravian Seminary and College for Women, and with the Superintendent of the Bethlehem Public Schools. Lehigh's Dean promised Kohn his full co-operation. The President of the Moravian Seminary went further, shutting down his institution completely for one afternoon while his students attended the picture en

masse, the first time since the Seminary was founded in 1742 that such an action had ever been taken. The Superintendent of Schools announced that high school students would be excused to attend matinée performances of Henry V, and permitted the distribution of student rate coupons, bulletins and study guides on the film throughout

the school system.

Having secured the schools' support, Kohn next approached the Parent-Teachers' Associations, the various women's clubs, the music and literary societies. Bethlehem's Junior League literally adopted the film, setting up phone committees to arrange theatre parties during the picture's engagement. Kohn spent in all two weeks to complete the arrangements for the Bethlehem screenings. The picture played there, as scheduled, for only two days. But all performances were sold out and the police had to be summoned to handle the lines at the theatre before each showing.

From Bethlehem, Kohn was sent up to Northampton, Mass., for a test run in the proverbially difficult New England territory. Capt. Harold Auten, representing J. Arthur Rank, had booked the film into the Academy of Music there. Kohn's function was to see that its three-day engagement played to capacity audiences. Again the local exhibitor was sceptical. A legitimate play had just flopped badly in his house. Although the Academy is located directly across from the campus of Smith College, it was the manager's considered opinion that "Smith girls wouldn't cross the street to see Henry V in person." To Kohn he advised, "Don't waste your time on Smith."

Nevertheless Kohn put through a call to President Herbert Davis of Smith College—and was at once invited to tea. At the President's home, he cited his experiences with Lehigh and the Moravian Seminary. Davis volunteered to go a step further. He called the treasurer of the college and arranged to have a check drawn at \$1.00 a ticket for each of Smith's 1,884 students. The girls would buy their tickets through the bursar's office. The school would absorb the difference—if there was a difference. Kohn left his presidential tea party with two matinées sold

Capitalising on this initial success, Kohn changed the newspaper ads. to read, "Henry V—Three days only—Matinée and evening performances—First two matinées completely sold out to Smith College." The Superintendent of Schools announced that students would be excused to attend the third matinée. Word of mouth did the rest. Tickets were soon at a premium for the Northampton

engagement.

While these negotiations were still in progress, United Artists received a frantic call from the manager of the theatre in nearby Amherst. He was in a difficult position. Amherst, a college for boys just nine miles from Northampton, was in traditional rivalry with Smith. As soon as the Henry V engagement had been announced for Northampton, a student delegation called on the manager of the Amherst Theatre to demand why Northampton had the film and he hadn't. Now the Amherst exhibitor wanted Henry V, and wanted it to play day and date with the Smith engagement. The contract was signed.

During the four and a half years that the film was road-shown, bookings became almost a formula: a certain proportion of the students in any town were certain to attend, and another percentage of the adult population. The film was then booked into a house for less than that potential, insuring capacity houses during the run—and a residue of people who still wanted to see the picture. Thus when Henry V came back—and return engagements of Henry V were from the beginning part of the plan—the audience would include those who had missed it the

first time around, plus an entirely new group that wanted to see it now because of what they had heard about it from friends who had attended the earlier presentations. On roadshows alone, *Henry V* grossed \$4,500,000 in the United States. And this special form of picture exploitation proved so relatively inexpensive that over 50 per cent of that figure represented clear profit. Still in general release, it will continue to add importantly to its grosses

during the next few years.

Hamlet, The Red Shoes, Tales of Hoffman, Cyrano de Bergerac and Pictura have all walked in the steps of the Henry V campaign. Their exploitation policies and plans were based largely on the experiences learned from the earlier film, adopted either in toto or with only minor variations. Cyrano, for example, involved a comprehensive—and notably successful—effort to engage the special interest of the grammar and high school teachers. The producers of Pictura, a film on the lives and works of six painters, have sought the support of the local art museums in the cities their film has played, even though in the trade museum sponsorship is commonly thought to spell death. Yet in Hartford, where *Pictura* was shown under the aegis of the Wadsworth Atheneum, it grossed \$2,000.00 in one night-more than the popular Five Fingers, showing in a nearby first-run house, pulled in its entire weekend engagement.

But what about a picture that is not made from a presold classic or work of art? What about a picture that has only the virtues of maturity, intelligence and taste to recommend it? Will special selling work for these too?

Shortly before his production of *Cyrano* went into distribution, Stanley Kramer told Bosley Crowther of the *New York Times*: "The thing, as I see it today, is to make pictures for the discriminating customers, of which there are an ever-increasing number. It is upon this market that our industry will have to depend." As the bitter competition between motion pictures and television continues, many producers have come to realise that they must supply a more distinctive kind of entertainment to survive.

And to insure that survival, they will have to draw back into the movie houses the same people reached by *Henry V*, *Hamlet*, and *Cyrano*, the reluctant audience. The experience with these films has indicated that this audience can be reached, but through methods far removed from normal film exploitation channels. Such special promotion might well have spelled the difference between success and failure for *The Heiress*, *Death of a Salesman* and *Place in the Sun*, all of which did poorly in the American market.

The odd thing is that Hollywood is increasingly turning out mature, arresting entertainment, but still insists on using its time-worn trade practices when it comes to selling such pictures. Right now Come Back, Little Sheba is being offered on Broadway as a sex drama, with gaudy marquee displays featuring the young athlete and the Delaney's star boarder in a passionate embrace while Burt Lancaster glowers at them. Off to one corner is Shirley Booth, made up to look like a harlot. This may help for the short-term haul—just as Streetcar Named Desire was successfully exploited on its sex situations.

But the reluctant audience cannot be sold on these shoddy practices, cannot be built through them into a reliable box office factor. Their support is not to be won with the lurid poster, the stern radio voice, the frenzied "coming attraction." They've had it. They are properly suspicious. The campaign for *Henry V* pre-shadowed a new form of film promotion designed to attract this non-

habitual moviegoer, a special selling for special films. It remains for Hollywood to test it further for its more

general application.



Three studies of Bette Davis in "The Star".

## Film Reviews

# THE BAD AND THE BEAUTIFUL and THE STAR

Reviewed by James Morgan

Two recent films are dedicated to the splendours and miseries of Hollywood: The Bad and the Beautiful (MGM) is a journey towards the interior of Babylon and one of its mighty, full of incidents and encounters, in structure derived from Citizen Kane and like Welles' film an attempt to explain the mysteries of a megalomaniac's progress; The Star (Fox) is a close, direct character study of a famous actress who has passed her prime and is engaged in a death struggle with boxoffice poisoning. The first is nearly a good film, the second does little more than provide a rather dilapidated shrine for a remarkable performance by Bette Davis, but both are agreed in certain verdicts on Hollywood—the ephemeral nature of success, the violent dislocations of private life, the follies of uncontainable ambition, the narrow corner round which luxury turns to squalor, the moment of triumph to the eternities of abasement. Each offers its own reiterated metaphor for the conditions of life in Hollywood; The Bad and the Beautiful refers to "the rat-race," The Star to "the sleigh-ride," but whatever the method the end of the journey is a graveyard of overgrown hopes and illusions without memorial.

In The Bad and the Beautiful the rise and fall of a ruthless producer, Jonathan Shields (Kirk Douglas), is seen through the eyes of three people whose lives he changed, who hate him although (and partly because) he has made them rich and famous—the first, a director (Barry Sullivan) whom Shields began by befriending, then betrayed, and who went on independently to success; the second, a girl (Lana Turner), alcoholic, nymphomaniac daughter of a John Barrymore-ish silent idol, whom Shields regenerated, bludgeoned into a star, allowed to fall in love with him and to imagine her love returned, before revealing that he was having an affair with an extra (also ambitious); and the third, a successful young novelist (Dick Powell) whom Shields brought out to Hollywood to write the screenplay of his novel, and forced to concentrate on his work by arranging for his wife to be entertained by a romantic Mexican star, with whom she is killed in a plane crash. The three flashbacks are effectively enclosed in a scene of the director, the star and the writer awaiting a telephone call from Shields in Paris, where he is starting up production again and is going to ask them to work with him. All three are vehemently determined not to, but the ending cynically suggests they will change their minds.

As in Kane, the dynamic centre of the film is not directly approached, but glimpsed from a variety of angles, and a mysterious early experience seems to have set the dynamo on its particular course. Shields' "Rosebud," it is hinted, lies in his relationship with his father—at whose funeral,

attended by extras hired to make a crowd, he is first seen as a young man, face racked with grief and tears welling into his eyes. The father, a once successful producer who went bankrupt, was widely detested; the son acknowledges that he was "not a heel—the heel," and yet, he couldn't say why, he loved him. Unfortunately the script (by Charles Schnee, from a story by George Bradshaw) does not follow this up, but proceeds to draw, with frequent liveliness and penetration, a portrait of a charming, chilling, unrelenting go-getter, played with characteristic force by Kirk Douglas, but a type rather than an individual; and the other serious flaw of the film as a whole is its failure to achieve communication of the passing of time. The story of Shields, from his beginnings in "B" pictures to his bankruptcy and retreat to Europe, covers eighteen years. But neither he, his associates and colleagues, nor Hollywood itself, bear the signs of them. (This is in complete contrast to The Star, where time is the judge and the avenger.) When the last story is half-way through, it is clear that, so far as Shields is concerned, it is to be only a repetition, another illustration of qualities already familiar; the centre has grown static, and the film, one feels, which is supposed to be an inside story of Hollywood, has been made by people who haven't got far enough outside it, who are still partial prisoners of its huge, extraordinary vacuum.

The quality of incidental observation, though, and of some of the personal dramas, notably the story of Shields and the star, is exceptional. Vincente Minnelli has directed the film with a consistently entertaining invention and richly assimilated detail—some of it derivative (the projection theatre scene, recognisably Kane), but all of it alive and intelligent. A Hollywood party reeking of exhibitionism, the actress' hysterical drive in her car at night after learning that Shields has betrayed her, the glimpses (often malicious) of films in production, the great atmospheric shots of the studio, a hectic evening spent trying to "entertain" a star before springing a script on him, a group of ageing extras, sullen, withdrawn and melancholy, being fitted into cat-men costumes much too small for them, for a shoddy horror picture—these episodes have a rare incisiveness, conveying not a conventional slick disenchantment but a bitterness as original and idiomatic in its way as Scott Fitzgerald's. There are some sharp minor portraits: two directors, the German von Ellstein (Ivan Triesault), with his formal, precise Prussian movements, his arrogant efficiency—modelled less on Stroheim, perhaps, as his name might suggest, than on Lang—and the British Whitfield (Leo G. Carroll), gentlemanly but insistent in his refusal to "cheat" his effects; the Southern Belle wife of the writer, amusingly played by Gloria Grahame, who threatens an anthropological study of the movie colony after a two-week visit; Gilbert Roland's "Gaucho" Ribera, the successful, easygoing, hedonistic star. But, brilliant as the film undoubtedly is, ingeniously shaped and textured, it remains, with its lack



An interesting experiment now to be seen in London is Gian-Carlo Menotti's film of his music drama, "The Medium", Co-directed with Alexander Hammid in Rome. This is one of the rare attempts at releasing an operatic film from stage conventions. Marie Powers repeats her original alarming creation. In this scene: Leo Coleman and Anna Maria Alberghetti.

of a developing centre, too insubstantial.

There is no doubt about the centre of The Star: Bette Davis, introduced in a memorable opening shot, as Margaret Elliot, once a top-line actress who now faces a sagging neckline, greedy creditors, a squalid furnished apartment, and in fact the annihilation of her raison d'être. She is a star or she is nothing. Berating her agent and her sponging relatives, going on a binge with her Oscar, trying to preserve her own legend for the young daughter who is living with her successful ex-husband and his second wife, she at last manages to gain a test for a character part and makes a fool of herself by trying to play it like a young star—and a spectacular crack-up seems inevitable. A rich subject: but the writers, having gone this far-already, from many points of view, quite a long way -vitiate it fatally with a banal regeneration motif (a faithful lover converts her to retirement, domestic bliss and the simple life), and the director, Stuart Heisler, offers only an inept technique and an apparently total lack of imagination. Apart from what it intermittently gains by being shot in and around Hollywood, the film is so slackly and uninterestingly put to-gether that, at moments, a point in Bette Davis' own performance is sadly muffed.

All the same, it is well worth seeing not only for what it might have been but for the star; this actress of wonderful temperament and precision creates a vivid, genuine figure, alternately pathetic and exasperating, gay and decrepit, vain, impossible and defenceless. That the character does not achieve complete coherence is due not to her but to inadequate construction. It is a portrait clearly drawn to some degree from personal experience, but on the artistic level not in the least self-indulgent or self-glamourising. One only hopes the film's conclusion is not a portent of personal intention; for Bette, it can at least be said, is better than ever.

MOULIN ROUGE Reviewed by Gavin Lambert

Pierre la Mure did not claim that his Moulin Rouge was an accurate biography of Toulouse-Lautrec, but a dramatic evocation of the artist and his background; and since John Huston has based his film upon the book, one imagines his intention to have been the same. Obviously, then, one mustn't reproach it for factual errors and fictionalised episodes—though one may feel this kind of approach to be ultimately pointless, and Maugham's method in The Moon and Sixpence, creating a distinct fictional variation on a theme of fact, more promising; but one can, and must, complain that Moulin Rouge (Romulus) adds up to an unacceptably glib and misleading

portrait of a famous artist.

Hutson, who scripted his own film in collaboration with Anthony Veiller, presents Lautrec as an ugly, rather acidulous dwarf, secretly lonely and embittered by his physical appearance, rejecting love after a disastrous affair with Marie, a ruthless prostitute, turning himself into a kind of unwilling artistic monk, prolific with witty and malicious impressions of the pleasure-loving and picturesque society with which he liked to surround himself. To this already basic vulgarisation, Huston adds an ironic twist of the artist's rejection, through pride and fear, of the one woman—Myriamme, a cultured model-who really cared for him. Perhaps, as a drama in its own right, subtlety and passion could have made this interesting; but it is narrated with a disconcertingly flat objectivity, and Lautrec's snappish frustration kept to a single monotonous level. In Jose Ferrer's glacial and sullen performance the painter emerges as fatally unsympathetic, what character he has is all too clearly established in the first thirty minutes and repeated in the following ninety; there is no real suggestion of the richness and tragedy of his temperament, and the remarkable physical resemblance achieved cannot disguise what a crude piece of portraiture this is.

For Lautrec was instinctively disposed to enjoy and savour a wide variety of life. He was a hedonist whose physical handicaps obstructed his participation but heightened his curiosity; he was almost feverishly inquisitive, he travelled and sketched in Spain, Holland and London, he visited and recorded operations in progress at hospitals and maisons closes as well as at the Moulin Rouge. As a companion his friends found him kind, modest and generous; it was only in his last years, in his 'thirties, that the strain told, he declined into alcoholism, a breakdown, a period in a sanitarium, violent alternations of mood. Neither performance nor film evokes the progression of this immensely lively, hard-working and pitiable character. The film's one dramatic image of him is, in effect, solidly fixed; a lonely little figure among the cancan girls, the entertainers and the clientèle of the Moulin Rouge, and even this is wrong in fact as well as implication, for Lautrec seldom went there alone, but nearly always with a crowd of companions. He was not solitary nor misanthropic, but sociable, eager, his cloest friends being drawn from artists and writers among his contemporaries, none of whom appears in the film, and not from the music-halls and streets, which occupy most of the footage.

Some of the narrower inaccuracies, too, seem indefensible. There is a flashback into the artist's childhood, in which he

falls downstairs and breaks both his thighs; apart from the fact that Lautrec suffered two accidents, separated by a year, one by slipping on a polished floor and the other into a ditch, no attempt is made in this scene to give the true background of his family. His eccentric aristocratic father, solitary and devoted to animals, an amateur sculptor, becomes a conventional lay figure. And Lautrec's middle years in Paris—his innumerable tours of the circus and the theatre, accompanied by one of two friends, a deaf-mute painter or his extremely tall, dignified, melancholy cousin, his challenging an acquaintance to a duel because he didn't like Van Gogh, his sympathy and fascination with all kinds of working people: nearly all this vivid, picturesque material is wasted, apparently for the sake of the prolonged episodes with Marie and Myriamme. (Nor, incidentally, does this attempt at crystallising Lautrec's personal life give the film a satisfactory shape; it remains episodic and untidily constructed.) Why, too, create Jane Avril as a singer when she was a famous dancer? To make matters worse, she is played by Zsa Zsa Gabor like a piece of Central European frou-frou who would be far more congruous in Blossom Time.

The concentration on visual effect suggests that Huston may have been more interested in his surface than his people; if so, it is all the more a pity his leading actor could not supply a measure of depth and sensibility. As an approximation, George Sanders' "Gauguin" in The Moon and Sixpence, stagey and sometimes tasteless though the film was, offered a closer and more developed character study-and, at least, it had humanity. On the surface, Moulin Rouge is far from tasteless, apart from one lapse into the "art-film," with quickly cut juxtapositions to give still pictures the illusion of movement. The Technicolor photography by Oswald Morris is a remarkable achievement, with a richness of light and tone, and a delicate diffusion which succeeds, sometimes beautifully, in creating the appropriate painterly texture. It is strange that such a sharp division should exist between Huston's surface appreciation of his material, and the material itself; that he should have used its visual richness only to embellish a void of indifferent writing and construction, to say nothing of performances so amateurish as Colette Marchand's Marie and the Gabor's Jane Avril, and a banal deathbed scene with ghosts from the past flitting in and out of the room in double exposure. It is no fault of the photography, nor of Paul Sheriff's elegant and flamboyant designs, that they only end, like exquisite icing on a sawdust cake, by increasing one's dissatisfaction. For the sad fact remains that with all its careful, superior craftsmanship, Moulin Rouge does for an artist and his art little more than most concerto films have done for composers.

#### LE PLAISIR Reviewed by Simon Harcourt-Smith

The yellow-back short stories of Guy de Maupassant were ranged in the nether obscurity of my father's boot-cupboard, beside Mademoiselle de Maupin and a selection of Zola. One naturally assumed them to be wicked, because they were hidden, presumably forbidden; and indeed there might have broken out a fine rumpus had I been caught reading La Maison Tellier at the age of thirteen or so. I had but the vaguest idea of what the famous "house" stood for: something inexplicably furtive and inexplicably shameful, like the books themselves. But then the local train drew Madame Tellier and her girls out into the Norman countryside; and their tears had set the village church rocking. A feeling of innocence and tenderness engulfed me; here nothing dark or furtive could possibly survive. That summer I did not rest till I had read every Maupassant volume in the boot-cupboard. Like the poetry of Verlaine or the songs of Berlioz,

Like the poetry of Verlaine or the songs of Berlioz, Maupassant's stories, however they may have struck our great-grandfathers, are nowadays. I think, essentially a delight of adolescence; and if they are to be projected on to the screen, it should be done with innocent hand. Max Ophuls is a director of immense accomplishment: his warmest champion, however, could hardly claim innocence for him, still less that peculiar French brand of innocence with which, for instance, René Clement has succeeded in charging not only the children but even the adults of Jeux Interdits.

Here is a quality that is, I believe, absolutely essential for any transference of Maupassant to the screen. The long queues outside Studio One may seem to confound my thesis; yet it is the absence of this innocence from Le Plaisir which

mars an otherwise ingenious piece of direction. It is a knowing rather than compassionate world that Ophuls here evokes. Not that he is incapable of compassion; Letter from an Unknown Woman was full of it; but there he was working in a world entirely familiar, the world of heartless Viennese menabout-town; here he strikes one as being lost, for all his acute sense of direction.

The impression of lost bearings and the knowingness of an inveterate diner-out are suggested right at the beginning by the voice of Peter Ustinov, purporting to give us a ghostly commentary from Maupassant himself, with a light French accent that is unbearably well mimicked; and to one's regret it is necessary to record that Ophuls remains the sophisticated cosmopolitan traveller throughout the greater part of the three Maupassant stories which make up Le Plaisir.

Yet Ophuls even when lost remains a fascinating artist, an acute intelligence. Though that intelligence may be alien to much of Maupassant's world, the artist in him at times responds to the artist in Maupassant with a spirit and a dexterity wholly delightful. The response is particularly rich in the first and last short pieces of the trilogy—Le Masque and Le Modèle. Here there is an entire lack of those nudging tricks which first seem to have become a mannerism of Ophuls



"Le Modèle", third story of "Le Plaisir". Daniel Gélin and Simone Simon.

in La Ronde. Here lechery is ennobled and tragedy polished by an irony that allows no place for the sly laugh.

Le Masque begins with an evocation of a public ball in Montmartre some seventy years ago—a scene that invites comparison with the opening passages of Moulin Rouge; and from this comparison John Huston's careful pièce montée does not, one must confess, emerge the victor. A dancer in a quadrille, with a curiously set face and puppet-like steps, collapses. By a long tracking shot that is the perfection of camera movement, we watch the inert nuisance carried through the dancers into a dark cubby hole where an irritated doctor tends him. Suddenly the secret is out; the set face is a mask, and behind it lies the ravaged mug of an ancient rip (Jean Galland), who had once been a handsome fashionable hair dresser; his vanity unable to forego the incense of conquest, he dons the mask, and still tries to play the devil with the girls.

dons the mask, and still tries to play the devil with the girls. Here to his great credit Ophuls has walked with the lightest and most graceful of steps. A restraint and taste equally admirable inform Le Modèle—the story of a painter (Daniel Gélin) who quarrels with his pretty mistress (Simone Simon). Though she has brought him fortune, he leaves her in exasperation. Fortune deserts the painter, but his disconsolate mistress finds him again, learns he is about to marry, threatens suicide, and is goaded into jumping out of the window. But she is baulked of death, and survives as a cripple, whom her lover feels obliged to marry. This apparently altruistic act brings fortune back to him. An ironical little story, admirably contrived, beginning and ending in a seaside beach setting that is a brilliant pastiche of a Boudin.

These two short pieces have themes of universal validity. La Maison Tellier on the other hand belongs exclusively to the Latin world. Ophuls does not seem to have realised that in small French towns of Maupassant's day, as in the Spanish and Italian provinces today, the brothel was far more than a mere factory of lust; it was a sort of respected club, where mayor and doctor, bank manager and engineer of the Ponts et Chaussées could read the Paris newspapers and play cards. A French or Italian director, understanding this well enough, would never have dwelt so lengthily or salaciously as does Ophuls upon the consternation that spreads one Saturday night among the prosperous male citizens of the town when they find Madame Tellier's amiable establishment temporarily closed. He would have moved rapidly to the real point of the story-the excursion of Madame Tellier and her girls deep into the country to attend the first communion of her little niece, the reactions of her troupe, their early delight in the countryside, the frightening silence and solitude of the rustic night, the tears in church, and then the return to popping champagne corks and the well tried jokes. Never has the eternal war between Town and Country been more crisply chronicled; the fact that the troupe are prostitutes instead of typists is a mere technical device, to heighten the clash and speed up the narrative. Unfortunately it has caused Ophuls to slow down his usually rapid tempo. And he visually shakes our confidence by dolling up Madame Tellier's provincial girls (among them we surprisingly find Danielle Darrieux) to look like a whole bevy of Cléo de Merodes.

This is not to say, however, that La Maison Tellier wholly

This is not to say, however, that La Maison Tellier wholly lacks virtue. The train journey and the drive in the farm cart to the farm are charming, the performance of Jean Gabin as Madame Tellier's brother is richly authentic, while, as in the other two episodes, much of the camera work is polished and ingenious. The comparative failure of this story only shows how high are the expectations we now have of Max Ophuls.

# THE TITFIELD THUNDERBOLT Reviewed by Penelope Houston

Playing with trains is one of the cinema's oldest and most agreeable diversions. Recently, though, the railways have been principally inhabited by spies and gangsters, and it must be a long time since a film set out so deliberately to exploit the comic possibilities of railway apparatus as does Ealing Studios' The Titfield Thunderbolt. The idea is engaging: the inhabitants of a small country village, faced with the closing down of their local single-track line, unite to buy the railway and to run it themselves. Saboteurs from a rival bus company plot to defeat the project, and it is only by bringing a century-old locomotive out of its museum retirement that the amateurs can convince a Ministry inspector of their capabilities. The



characteristic T. E. B. Clarke dénouement makes both for farcical action and for the established practice of laughing at bureaucracy.

The film, assuming with some justice that everyone shares its attachment to trains, dwells affectionately on their appearance and habits. Such happenings as the duel between the toy-like train and the steam roller, the careering across country of a runaway locomotive, or the sight of the Thunderbolt setting off, with vicar George Relph and bishop Godfrey Tearle at the controls, are clearly calculated to please every frustrated engine driver in the audience.

To such an agreeably devised theme, Charles Crichton, the director, and T. E. B. Clarke, the writer, might have brought rather more freshness and invention in the way of visual humour and of dialogue. The scheming of the saboteurs seems at times needlessly juvenile, and although there are some cheerfully destructive and anarchic episodes, such as the exploits of the engine that goes off the rails, they have not been fully exploited. The makers, too, should not have to resort to that now ageing American "counter attack" gag of the flickering television screen, and the intramural studio joke has become an irritating convention. The film gets up steam with the run of the gallant Thunderbolt, an enjoyably contrived sequence, but it comes a little late.

Likeable performances are given by George Relph, the engine driving vicar, Naunton Wayne, the familiar fussy and perpetually outraged business man, Stanley Holloway, the happily alcoholic patron of the line, and Godfrey Tearle, the visiting fireman. And Edie Martin splendidly rules the booking office. But Titfield seems, finally, less a real community than a toy village conjured up to play with its picturesque trains in some soft, pleasingly photographed colour landscapes.

#### COME BACK, LITTLE SHEBA

Reviewed by Lindsay Anderson

Miss Shirley Booth makes her entrance in the third or fourth shot of Come Back, Little Sheba. We fade in on one of those familiar suburban avenues, down which jauntily prances one of those familiar American undergraduettes. She turns in at a path, runs up to a porch, and presses the bell. Cut inside to the empty hall: a noise of shuffling feet, and there comes slopping down the stairway the shapeless figure of a blowzy middle-aged woman, draped in a shabby wrap, groping her sleepy way to answer the door.

The film thus immediately, and with a somehow characteristic directness, plays its ace. Instantly comes the pleasurable

The film thus immediately, and with a somehow characteristic directness, plays its ace. Instantly comes the pleasurable shock of contact with a new personality—not merely that of the actress, but of this character so completely realised, so nakedly exposed before our eyes. This Lola Delaney is a poor, hopeless person—the sort of person we feel immediately sorry for, and thereafter avoid as strictly as possible. Once, we can see, she was a pretty thing, but she has declined into a middle-aged slattern, sentimentally affectionate, utterly without capacity for the day-to-day tasks of running her home. Miss Booth's performance still has the feel of theatre in it, which is not surprising in view of the number of times she played it on the stage, but this hardly mars the stunning virtuosity with which that graceless waddle, that stumbling, nervous impetuosity of speech, that perpetually anxious sensibility of the eyes expose the mingled vulgarity, boredom and tremulous pathos of the part.

Lola's is only half the problem of Come Back, Little Sheba. Doctor Delaney, her husband, is a man slightly older than she is, and painfully able to understand and analyse the appalling situation of their marriage. Attracted to Lola when she was still young and fresh, he married her only because she became pregnant by him; she lost the child, and can bear no more. His marriage ruined Delaney's career, and in his despairing bitterness he started drinking and became an alcoholic. When the story opens he has managed, by an extreme effort of will, to keep off drink for a year. As his wife's habitual state of mind is one of longing for an unattainable state of innocence in the past (the "Little Sheba" of the title is her vanished pet dog, to whose loss she cannot reconcile herself), Delaney's is one of heroic determination to build something out of life, even on these shabby and inferior

Shirley Booth and Burt Lancaster in "Come Back, Little Sheba".

foundations. It is the intrusion into their household as a lodger of an attractive, flirtatious college girl that sets stirring once again all the couple's old desires and regrets, and precipitates—at least temporarily—the collapse of Delaney's so

laboriously constructed self-discipline.

Come Back, Little Sheba is a poignant picture of a situation near despair—the Delaneys' is the sort of relationship that carries on quietly in one corner of a Chekhov play. The sharpness of perception and the tenderness to human frailty which is implicit throughout (particularly where the people are growing old and unattractive: the healthy young are most obnoxiously characterised) express a sadly stoical attitude, a subdued affirmation of the values of courage and affection. (It is essentially about the sad business of making the best of a bad job.) These are far from the traditional qualities of commercial cinema, and Hal Wallis' production of the film is remarkable for its respect for William Inge's original. The adaptation, by Ketti Frings, is very close, and Daniel Mann, who directed the film, was also responsible for the Broadway production. Only in the casting of Burt Lancaster as Doc Delaney does there seem to have been a deliberate gesture in favour of the box-office.

Oddly enough, the film suffers about equally from its oversedulous regard for the stage production, and from this miscasting. Lancaster is an actor of instinctive sincerity, whose playing has always a certain gentleness and sensibility. But his range is limited, and this difficult part goes beyond it: in the simple matter of age, he is quite wrong, and the heavy lines of make-up and the whitened hair do not convince. The direction, with its almost exclusive interest in the actors, does not much help here—one has the feeling that Mann (whose first film this is) has allowed his technicians to tell him what to do with the camera most of the time, and the result is a theatrical handling of an efficient, orthodox, quite impersonal decoupage. There is a plodding quality to the

film's progress.

However, there is nothing pretentious about Come Back, Little Sheba, and its qualities of writing and performance are outstanding enough to make it one of the best films to have come out of Hollywood for months. Shirley Booth is not its only revelation: Terry Moore and Richard Jaeckel appear brilliantly as the vivid, vulgar and pitiless adolescents. These two incarnations have the terrible ring of truth to them, and Mr. Mann's direction of their scenes is absolutely faultless.

#### THE MEMBER OF THE WEDDING

Reviewed by Karel Reisz

The cinema's fictional researches into childhood tend in the main to tell us less about the child's own internal world than about the adult realities which surround it—one thinks of The Fallen Idol and Louisiana Story, Bicycle Thieves and Jeux Interdits. The adult world may be illuminated in being observed through a child's innocent mind but the conflicts within the child's mind itself usually remain obscure, unassessed. This is not surprising, for the cinema compared with, say, the novel, probes inadequately into the finer subtleties of personal relationship and motive: it deals, by its very nature, too exclusively with externals. The comparison inevitably springs to mind when an analytical novel like Carson McCullers' "The Member of the Wedding" comes to be adapted to the screen (in this case via the author's own play). Frankie, the novel's 12-year-old Southern girl heroine, on the verge of adolescence and beginning to feel the need of some form of emotional involvement, "falls in love" with the idea of her brother's wedding: in finding herself rebuffed at a time when she feels she has most to give to those she loves—her brother, quite naturally, refuses to let Frankie accompany him on his honeymoon—and through a subsequent more violent contact with grown-up values, Frankie's childhood is dramatically ended.

It proves, as one might have expected, difficult screen material. The drama develops within the child's mind and is caught more in the novelist's withdrawals from the action than through the description of externals. Unfortunately, only the latter can be photographed and the loss has to be made up somehow—in this case the attempt is made through inten-

Jean Simmons, Alan Young and Robert Newton in "Androcles and the Lion".



Runaway train: "The Titfield Thunderbolt."

sifying the dialogue. Where the novelist says, to crystallise a particular emotion,

(Frankie) stood in the corner of the bride's room, wanting to say: "I love the two of you so much and you are the we of me. Please take me with you from the wedding." . . . But . . . her tongue was heavy in her mouth and dumb. She could only speak in a voice that shook a little—to ask where was the veil . . .

shook a little—to ask where was the veil . . . the film has to let her speak the lines to convey the point at all. This is a fatal blunting of effect, typical of the film's

whole approach.

Zinnemann's main concern in directing the film seems to have been to introduce movement into a static subject. Much of the action is staged in long-lasting big close-ups but this, far from achieving the presumably desired effect of closely identifying the characters' emotions, often only draws attention to the artificialities of dialogue. The playing of the original Broadway cast is extremely accomplished—though the two characters who are only, so to speak, the props in Frankie's emotional battles are much more successfully realised than Frankie herself: the beautiful Ethel Waters endows the old negro nanny with a great good heart and Brandon de Wilde conveys well the isolation of the young child from the bewildering happenings. Julie Harris, a young stage actress making her debut in the cinema, is faced with an almost impossible task: she is asked, under the camera's close scrutiny, to play a 12-year-old child. That she fails in a



gallant attempt is due only partly, however, to the physical difficulties—one is constantly aware of the immaculately dishevelled hair, the too perfectly grubby elbows, the carefully studied movements which are elegantly awkward, not gawky; more important, among all the complex apparatus of the performance—she uses, for instance, an irritating trick of speech: a kind of adenoidal panic in delivery which is not, really, particularly child-like—all life drains out of the

One hopes that Zinnemann who, when given material he can respond to, is an acute and sensitive observer (The Men and Teresa were rich in firm characterisation and atmospheric detail, where The Member of the Wedding seems to be happening in a vacuum) will find his next project, a film of "From Here to Eternity," more suited to his great talent.

#### THE GENERAL Reviewed by Penelope Houston

We have seen Buster Keaton twice in recent years; the bitter, sad little appearance in Sunset Boulevard, among the forgotten quartet at Norma Desmond's bridge table, and the wonderful last scene of Limelight. Here, while Chaplin clowned for the audience, Keaton, aware neither of his partner nor his public, engaged in his solitary struggle with the piano. It was a moment both characteristic and revealing. Chaplin, from the winks and asides of the early two-reelers to the eloquence of *Limelight*, has always addressed himself to an audience. Keaton, locked in a mysterious world of silent endeavour, has remained aloof, uncommunicative.

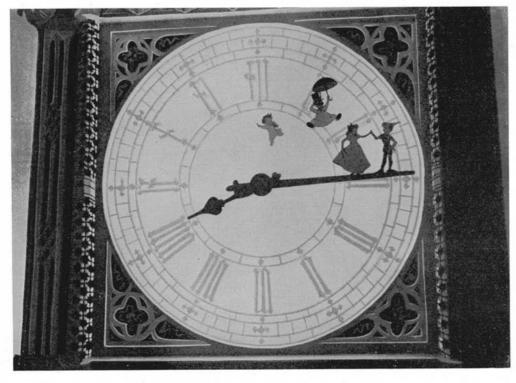
But to compare Chaplin and Keaton is to find only contrasts. A part of Chaplin's appeal has always rested on the simplest of all the screen's conventions: identification. His is a universal loneliness. Keaton's is self-imposed, undemanding of pity, almost aristocratic in its remote non-conformism. It seems to me, though, that a little too much has been made of the famous deadpan expression. Keaton has himself told how he was trained by his father in the rigid, impassive manner, on the assumption that the funniest effects are those of which the comedian appears unconscious. But he could not neutralise the effect of those melancholy, penetrating eyes; above the energetic body, all sharp and decisive angles, the head is fixed, immobile; only the extraordinary eyes maintain his tenuous contact with humanity.

The hero of The General is a little engine driver, turned down by the Confederate recruiting sergeants, dismissed as a coward by his girl, who, in pursuit of his stolen engine, penetrates the Unionist lines, spies on a military conference, rescues the girl, recovers the engine and steams back in triumph to the Confederate encampment. The exploits are preposterously heroic; their manner of execution is brisk but detached. Confronted with the outlandish or the alarmingthe disappearance of his train, the discovery that in setting fire to the railway bridge he has placed himself on the wrong side of the blaze, or that, in his grand scheme to fire on the enemy train, he has directed the cannonball straight into the cab of his own engine—Keaton remains imperturbable. This, one feels, is how he expects things to behave; there is no need for undue alarm. It is out of this laconic, matterof-fact acceptance, this obstinate persistence in effort, however misguided, this untroubled, dream-like logic, that Keaton builds his comedy technique. The film advances in a series of triumphs and setbacks, with each check stimulating him to fresh activity, fresh displays of ingenuity. The train puffs past first the retreating Confederate troops, then the advancing Yankees, while its driver, sublimely unaware, busily saws wood for the engine. It runs steadily towards an obstacle across the line while Keaton, spread-eagled against the front of the engine, comes as close to trepidation as we ever see him before he casually bounces the log out of the way with a neat

jab from one he is already clasping.

Some critics have seen Buster Keaton as a lonely little human figure engaged in an unending conflict with the vast mechanical monsters which inhabit his films. Certainly, the inanimate often baffles him, as in the famous sequence in The Navigator when the young millionaire on the drifting liner gloomily and ineffectually sets about cooking his breakfast in a ship's galley equipped to feed five hundred people, or at the moment in The General when he busily flings logs on to the tender, unaware that they are sliding down on the other side. But somehow the wood is safely loaded, and an ingenious system of pulleys, ropes and levers transforms the liner's kitchen. Keaton is far from being the victim of an implacable and malevolent combination of mechanical forces. Rather, the machine is a partner to be coaxed, worked over and bullied before it will give him what he wants. And so, active and purposeful, the engine driver runs backwards and forwards over the tender and skips from the engine to the line to change the points or to lay his booby-traps. A small part of the attraction of his films, perhaps, lies in the elementary fascination of watching someone else hard at work.

With these simple resources—a railway line, a train to chase and one to be chased—the comedy follows a classically direct course, with scarcely a gag or a situation inserted for its own sake. It is only when the film leaves the trains behind, in the final battle scenes, the fooling with the sword that flies from its scabbard for the last time to impale an enemy sniper, that the effects seem rather too deliberately contrived, the



Walt Disney, whose recent fulllength cartoons have tended more and more to be based on English Children's classics ("The Wind in the Willows", "Alice in Wonder-land") now offers his version of "Peter Pan". An audacious step is the creation of a human figure for Tinkerbell. Here the flying Darlings, led by Peter, alight on Big Ben.

situations a little too real to be altogether funny. In part this may be because the film, directed by Keaton in collabora-

tion with Clyde Bruckman, conveys, unobtrusively, so exact and stylish a sense of its period. The comedian has strayed on to a real battlefield and, momentarily, the illusion cracks.

Human relationships, defying logic, breaking his solitary concentration of purpose, form the smallest part of any Keaton film. Here, his attitude towards the girl (the resilient and good-humoured Marion Mack) characteristically combines protective affection with evaporation. When she bines protective affection with exasperation. When she arranges her well-intentioned booby-trap in the path of the enemy train or, under fire from their pursuers, snatches up a broom and begins sweeping out the engine cab, he finds her endearingly ridiculous. But for Keaton the real world is

Innocently and without bravado, Keaton has the measure of his surroundings. He does not, like Harold Lloyd, want to be admired or successful; he is not, like Harry Langdon, a child at large in a puzzling universe; he has not, like Chaplin, assumed the dreams and the sorrows of the world. But his enduring, unsentimental self-sufficiency has its own intimations of melancholy, in the contrast between his determination and his resources as he marches off down the line in pursuit of his runaway train and, always, in the sad, thoughtful eyes set in the pale poker face. Keaton is the most exact, the most mathematically precise, of comedians, yet as one laughs one wonders: the quintessential Buster Keaton seems always to retreat a little, behind the enigmatic, impassive mask of the comedian.

#### IN BRIEF

After many delays, Gabriel Pascal's fourth Shaw production, his first in Hollywood, ANDROCLES AND THE LION (R.K.O.) has arrived. It turns out to be in the line of Caesar and Cleopatra, though considerably better, rather than of Pygmalion or Major Barbara. Once again a historical play has been chosen—a dramatic comedy of the Roman Empire's persecution of the Christians, and the "conversion" of a decadent Caesar by a simple, unassuming tailor-and a good deal of its irony and subtlety sacrificed to pomposity and size.

The adaptation by Chester Erskine is quite faithful, though the first half hour is awkwardly constructed, but he gives it very pedestrian direction; mounted against an ugly theatrical reconstruction of Rome, the film itself can appeal only through the performances, most of which are competent, a few distinguished. Alan Young, a television comedian with a style something like Danny Kaye's, makes an engaging figure of Androcles, and one's only regret is that the director seems to encourage a genuine characterisation to make itself into a to encourage a genuine characterisation to make usen into a comic turn. Robert Newton's Ferrovius, the wild Christian warrior, has a bizarre quality which—partly, one feels, by natural accident—is effective. There are sharp, stylish portraits, too, by Reginald Gardner (Lentulus) and Maurice Evans (Caesar). The only serious miscasting is Victor Mature as the "handsome captain," who, rugged and rueful though he determinedly is, does not fit into the Shavian world.

A pity that an entertaining play should be denrived of light-

A pity that an entertaining play should be deprived of lightness and imagination on the screen, and a mystery that Pascal, devoted to giving one the pleasures of Shaw's dialogue and some good players to deliver it, makes everything else less congenial.—Gavin Lambert.

Since her first appearance in An American in Paris, M.G.M. have seemed a little uncertain as to what to do with Leslie Caron, a young actress who combines great vitality with the forlorn, waiflike quality that—particularly when a slight foreign accent goes with it—always has surefire appeal. She is ideally cast, though, in LILI, a fragile, fairy-tale story of an orphan girl who joins a French travelling carnival for love of the flashy, handsome conjurer (Jean Pierre Aumont), but finally turns to the operator of the puppet show, a lame, embittered man who can express his real tenderness only through his puppet actors. Mel Ferrer plays the part with restraint and sympathy, Leslie Caron makes an enchanting Lili, and the director, Charles Walters, approaches the dangerous territory of whimsical fantasy with a light and easy assurance. Brightly painted fairground sets, an attractive theme tune and two stylishly staged dream dance sequences, gay and senti-mental consolidate the film's appeal. Lili is in no sense a major work, but for once a film which seems designed expressly to charm most engagingly achieves its purpose.—James Morgan.

## Books

THE TECHNIQUE OF FILM EDITING, by Karel Reisz. Introduction by Thorold Dickinson. Illustrated. (The Focal Press, 30/-)

#### Reviewed by Seth Holt

Editing is a process about which the average cinemagoer knows nothing, of which he has scarcely even heard. Th average enthusiast, on the other hand, knows all about itall about Eisenstein, Pudovkin and the rest, all about intellectual montage and the juxtaposition of significant images, all about the "dialectic" and the "grammar" of the film. Indeed, he has built up a montage mystique of formidable esoteric proportions and impenetrability.

This state of affairs has now started to change; recently, in fact, there has been a tendency to emulate the bear who leaned over so far backwards that he fell flat on his face. The difficulty about editing has been, I think, the fact that by its very nature the process tends to uncover fundamental principles in æsthetics-probably because it deals so closely with matters of rhythm, construction and so on. This has led people to reverse the process and attempt to apply principles proper only to other arts to the cinema—and, particularly, to editing. Eisenstein, with a taste for æsthetics, find ing so many fruitful ideas in the editing process, went on to try and make his films obey complex rules of literary and other origins. Another difficulty has been the blurred line of demarcation between what goes on in the cutting room and what has gone on in the way of editing before the film reaches the cutting room. In this book, the word "editing" or "editing process" has been used, I think rightly, to describe not only what happens in the cutting room, but the arrangement of all the elements of a film in relation to each other, from shot to shot, sequence to sequence, soundtrack to image, and so on. Obviously this involves script, direction, cutting, sound laying, mixing; it is, as Thorold Dickinson points out in his introduction, the first time that a really exhaustive examination of editing in all its aspects has been undertaken. The result could almost be called a textbook of editing practice and theory. It is, certainly, the only book I have read on the subject that I would wholeheartedly recommend to an initiated enthusiast.

It is remarkable the way in which Karel Reisz manages simply and clearly to set forth the intricacies of a process which is not so much technical in the sense that a sound mixer's or lighting cameraman's work are technical-of course I am not suggesting that sound mixers or lighting cameramen are only technicians, but they need to be equipped with more knowledge of a technical nature—but technical in the æsthetic sense. Problems of construction (form), rhythm, counterpoint, are all matters of detailed everyday consideration conscious or unconscious, for the editor. These are the things, I think,

which led Eisenstein up a blind alley.

Karel Reisz doesn't fall into any of the old traps; on the other hand, he deals very fairly and clearly in the historical section with the theories formulated by Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Kuleshov ("intellectual montage" is particularly well explained). The exposition is refreshingly free from jargon (except for "juxtaposition," but what would we do without "juxtaposition"?) and one can see directly the pitfalls which these too special theories dig for themselves. If the book has a bias, it tends perhaps, if only very slightly, to the school of thought which claims that "the film is a visual art, therefore image must predominate." This is on the side of the angels, certainly, and in the latter part of the book Karel Reisz deals very expertly with imaginative sound cutting. But in one place, for example, he remarks:

The simple editing pattern of two-shot and alternating close shots, used simply or with minor variations, is by no means the ideal way of directing a scene of dialogue. Most passages shot in this way are visually dull, and gain little in transition from script to screen. The formula is used so extensively because writers so frequently give little indication of what visual action is to accompany the spoken words, and because it is easier to handle: the director merely has to cover the scene



John Huston filming one of the battle scenes on location for "The Red Badge of Courage.

from, say, half a dozen different set-ups, and let the editor do the best he can with the result. . . . In a more adventurous approach to dialogue scenes, the visuals can be used to contribute more positively to the total effect. Even if the words convey most of the facts and information, the images must still remain the primary vehicle for the dramatic interpretation.

The obtrusive use of imaginative set-ups or elaborate camera movements in certain contexts would detract from the dramatic line of what is, after all, primarily a dramatic The cinema is visual, literary, or what have youbut it remains, primarily, dramatic. Ivan the Terrible was a film designed and executed with exquisite visual sense and imagination, but it failed because its dramatic conception lacked direction and force. In certain dramatic contexts, to return to "alternating close shots," this method of shooting is the most dramatic one, and therefore the best, whether "inventive" or not. Also, material of this kind can be "inventive" or not. Also, material of this kind can be arranged rhythmically in quite subtle and dramatically effective ways.

In another part of the book, while quite rightly condemning an editor's tendency to interfere-without careful consideration—with the timing of an actor's performance, it might have been added that it is possible, by careful examination of the material, to effect an actor's ideal intention in the matter of timing; anticipated or delayed reactions are not rare in a medium which demands so much of actors, breaking as it does their performance down into tiny units. be controlled in the cutting room—therefore, why should it not be? An actor's timing may be right in an isolated close-up, but wrong when put in its context. Again, isolating the essence of an actor's expression by cutting off the minute preparation and anti-climax at either end, can be very effective and dramatically right in certain contexts. surely, interference with a vengeance.

In the passage defining that old perennial, "a documentary," Karel Reisz adheres to what is now the classic view the Paul Rotha view. It is perhaps only a matter of opinion, but I have always thought that the confusion about the word "documentary" was due to the fact that, at a certain period, a group of factual film makers tended to work in the lyric mode, that the factual films were quite properly called docu-mentary films, but that the lyric quality of some of them was then confused with the word documentary. This lyric quality, after all, is contained in many story films which are not called documentary: and so on. It seems to me a simple semantic confusion.

Another small quibble: I don't think by any means all editors will agree with the dictum that cuts without overlaid dialogue or other sounds should be the exception rather than the rule.

All these criticisms, in fact, are in the nature of quibbles, and technical or professional ones at that. The book is sure to remain the best introduction to the subject for a long time.

#### PICTURE, by Lillian Ross (Gollancz 16s.) Reviewed by Penelope Houston

Any book on Hollywood is likely to be something of an exposé. We are prepared for the "frantically in-bred and frantically competitive jungle", for the "Mediæval monarchy... Palace revolutions all the time", for the "court intrigues of Hollywood's twilight." We expect, in other words, the worst, and many people, following Lillian Ross's articles as they appeared last summer in The New Yorker may have they appeared last summer in The New Yorker, may have felt that she was giving them it. The publication of the series, as Picture, makes it possible to assess what is undoubtedly a heavy indictment, though one to be read for the most part between the lines. An attack on Hollywood is never Miss Ross's declared intention; but outside, as it were, her frame of reference remains that slightly derisive, more than a little horrified, air of well-bred deprecation with which the urbane magazine for which she writes tends to survey the habits of the West Coast barbarians.

Picture tells the story of a film with a rare objectivity and lack of involvement; Miss Ross conveys far less concern with the eventual outcome than did, for instance, Lindsay Anderson in his Making a Film. But fate, or luck, had determined that the picture concerned, The Red Badge of Courage, should become a highly controversial production. It was the occasion, in the power politics of Hollywood, of a major cabinet crisis,

reported here in revealing detail.

At M-G-M, Louis B. Mayer was Vice-President in charge of the studio; Dore Schary, the relative newcomer, was, and is, Vice-President in charge of production. Mayer had become increasingly perturbed by the "arty" tendencies which, he felt, Schary was encouraging. He particularly disapproved of *Red Badge*: it epitomised artiness, it was bound to lose money. Miss Ross quotes a magnificent Mayer outburst:

... Don't show the good, wholesome American mother in the home. Kind. Sweet. Saerifices. Love." Mayer paused and by his expression demonstrated, in turn, paused and by his expression demonstrated, in turn, maternal kindness, sweetness, sacrifice and love, and then glared at Freed and me. "No!" he cried, "knock the mother on the jaw!" He gave himself an uppercut to the chin. "Throw the little old lady down the stairs!" He threw himself in the direction of the American flag. "Throw the mother's good, homemade chicken soup in the mother's face!" He threw an imaginary plate of soup in Freed's face. "Step on the mother! Kick her! That is art, they say. Art!"

But Nick Schenck, who rules M-G-M from his New York office, backed Schary, and Mayer finally resigned from the

office, backed Schary, and Mayer finally resigned from the studio during the last stages of work on the film. This was part one of the crisis. Part two came with catastrophic audience reactions at the sneak previews and an eleventh hour attempt to save the picture for the box-office by cutting, shifting the order of events, adding narration (" Jabber, jabber, jabber, who wants to listen?" said Mayer) and giving the film a "dignified" framework as a version of a classic American novel.

Miss Ross, an acute observer, tells much of the story in terms of personalities. She introduces, she describes, then she seems to wait for her characters to give themselves away. So much use of conversation, brittle, sharp, slangily repetitive, implies a notebook, a phenomenal memory, or a clever approximation to what was said. One feels that, as evidence, it should be approached with caution.

Huston, seen often at the centre of something rather arbitrarily described as a "Huston scene" seems elusive: energy, great care for details of faces, of moods, less for the organisational problems—the picture is not filled in. There are Sam Spiegel, producer of The African Queen, who had "promoted for himself an extensive knowledge of what promoted for himself an extensive knowledge of what Huston that most of them were jealous of", and who appears periodically with the slightly sinister reminder that "I have him next"; Mayer, sitting at a great desk furnished with a prayer book, a statuette of the Republican Party's elephant and photographs of lions, and enacting scenes from the Andy Hardy pictures with tears in his eyes; Schary, with "a definite hint of the firm-minded and paternalistic Sunday School teacher", and an optimistic faith in the film industry and his own pictures, The Next Voice You Hear and Go For Broke! But the book's hero is the producer, Gottfried Reinhardt, who seems to have grown on Miss Ross's affections. duced as looking like a slightly worried, melancholy Teddybear, with a tendency to fuss over details that the director preferred to brush aside, it was he who, with Huston away in Africa and the picture assailed from all sides, did his best to defend it from mutilation. His long, sad letter to Huston, with its fairness to Schary—"How could I deny him the privilege to salvage a million-and-three-quarter-dollar investment "-its undertones of bitterness-" Maybe I have a special idea of a John Huston picture. Maybe even more special than John Huston has"—appears a strange and illuminating reversal of the traditional producer-director relationship. And, finally, there is the sovereign of M-G-M, Nick Schenck, who makes the book's last and most telling comment:

"I supported Dore. I let him make the picture. I knew the best way to help him was to let him make a mistake. Now he will know better. A young man has to learn by making mistakes. I don't think he'll want

to make a picture like that again."

The shooting of the picture, the normal ticking over of Hollywood operations, is graphically reported. One reads with greatest interest of the budget (an estimated \$1,434,789, an actual \$1,642,017), of Huston in action, of the work of M-G-M's head cutter, Margaret Booth, whose name never appears these days on the credit titles but who is clearly a major power behind the scenes. For addicts of the outlandish there are the submission of the script to a psychologist, for professional advice on the validity of its theme, and the producer's heroic action in fording the Sacramento River to persuade the insurance experts that it would be safe for his regiment of extras.

Red Badge of Courage was made in a mood of double-

barrelled confidence: it was to be both a great and a profitable picture. Then came the setback of the previews; audiences laughed, cat-called, walked out, and because a considerable investment was at stake their resistance had to be conquered. Scenes which had been praised a few months before were now taken out, even the course of the battle was strangely re-arranged. It is here that one would welcome the personal comment that Lillian Ross refuses to make. Was the final version of The Red Badge of Courage a ruined masterpiece? The critic must try to arrive at his own answer. I do not believe that it was, and it is clear that such a reliable witness as Gottfried Reinhardt had moments of despondent foreboding: "We do not have a great picture. There is no story because we do not show what the youth is thinking. It is not in the script. John said he would put it on the screen. It is not on the screen."

Whether the changes were for the better, artistically or commercially, is, of course, another matter. But what Picture most strikingly demonstrates is the extent to which the studio could be panicked. A lot of teenagers at the preview disliked the film; no one had foreseen the possibility; no one (always excepting Mayer) had faced the issue clearly in the early stages, before the investment had been made; no one had been ready to admit that Red Badge might be a great film but, in view of its story, its characters, its crisis in emotion rather than in action, was scarcely likely to be a box-office winner. The unprejudiced observer might foresee that this was a picture for the relatively rarified atmosphere of the specialised cinemas rather than for the rough treatment of ordinary commercial distribution. But Hollywood, not for the first time, is caught in the act of self-delusion, the irrational determination to have it both ways: that is the gravest charge.

M-G-M may well feel that Miss Ross gave them a poor

return for their hospitality, and it seems improbable that she, or anyone else, will be given the chance to write just this sort of book again. Picture is written from rather too close to the surface, with a good, hard glitter of journalistic competence and a diabolically sharp eye for the damaging detail. But in the end this entertaining and highly polished piece of reporting leaves us where most Hollywood books leave us: we can have few doubts or uncertainties about what may go wrong, but we are little nearer to an understanding of how, against all the odds, an *Intruder in the Dust*, a *Teresa*, a Place in the Sun, a Death of a Salesman came to be made.

#### READERS' CHOICE

In the January-March issue of SIGHT AND SOUND we invited our readers to join in the game of "ten best" choices, asking them to send in lists of the ten films which had made the strongest impression on them. An enthusiastic response, for which we are grateful, brought in 118 letters, from the U.S.A., France, Switzerland, Germany, Portugal, and South Africa, as well as from this country, with the following

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.The Blue Angel (Von Sternberg, 1930)		13	,,	
Partie de Campagne (Renoir, 1937)		13	,,	
Louisiana Story (Flaherty, 1947)		12	,,	
The Ox-Bow Incident (Wellman, 1943)		12		

A correspondent, Mr. Peter Luft, commented that a considerable element of chance was bound to enter into the "To your younger readers, silent cinema is an unknown quantity, while few people in the provinces will be able to consider, say, Casque d'Or, Jeux Interdits, or Miracolo a Milano for their lists." Mr. Luft also suggested a list of the Bottom Ten Films, as being "by far the most satisfying to compile." Many correspondents commented that they were only in their twenties, and that their lists consequently were compiled mostly from fairly recent films, or from films, such as City Lights and All Quiet on the Western Front, that have had recent reissues. But though the choices—notably the runners-up-reflect this, it is interesting to see that five films appear in all three lists: those of directors, critics and SIGHT AND SOUND readers. Bicycle Thieves certainly dominates, though one reader, Mrs. Hodges, protested strongly: "I'm sorry, but if that is neo-realism I do not like it at all." City Lights, Intolerance, Battleship Potemkin and Brief Encounter also figure in all lists. Three of our readers were roused to send in lists of the ten best films they had not seen, mentioning, among other titles, Earth, Greed, Modern Times, The Kid, Mother. Garbo's Anna Karenina, Fury and Le Jour se Lève.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

Eisenstein

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND,

SIR,-In his review of my biography of Sergei M. Eisenstein (January-March issue), Thorold Dickinson mentions two points which he feels I have inadequately covered. One is whether or not Eisenstein was a member of the Communist Party;

the other, the matter of his income.

So far as I know, Eisenstein was never a member of the Communist Party. Like most Soviet cinema and theatre people of his own generation, he was "a fellow traveller" To my knowledge, the exceptions to this rule Revolution. were Fredrick Ermler, who became a member of the Communist Party early in his career, and Vsevolod Pudovkin, who became a Party member in the early 1930s.

Eisenstein, like other leading film and theatre directors, was paid a basic salary each month by the State. From 1932 to 1935. Eisenstein's salary was 2,000 roubles a month. In addition to this salary, he was paid special fees when he acted as scenario consultant to other film units. He also received payment for the articles he published. When he wrote a scenario, he was paid a fee, and during the period of direction he received a director's salary. Thus, his income came from several sources-the administrative bureau of the film industry, the finance department of individual studios (for example, he was paid directly by the Yalta, Odessa and Georgian studios as scenario consultant), and from the funds of newspapers and magazines. In the case of The Valkyrie production in 1940, Eisenstein's fees for directing came from the Bolshoi Theatre.

I hope these details will clarify my text for readers, and I'm grateful to Thorold Dickinson for drawing attention to my

unclear exposition of Eisenstein's economics.

Yours faithfully,

27 Clarendon Road,

MARIE SETON.

W.11.

#### The Red Danube

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

Sir,-Whilst I am in general agreement with the thesis Karel Reisz in Hollywood's BOOMERANG, he has chosen to include a synopsis of The Red Danube as Exhibit A and to discuss incidents of the film elsewhere as if it were the product of a sprightly Catholic scriptwriter in Hollywood. It was in fact made from the novel of the same title by Bruce Marshall—as old a hand as Graham Greene. The novel was first published in 1947 and was written out of first-hand knowledge of the problems of the quadripartite occupation of Vienna. Thus what appears to be the sugar coat to a pill to purge commies, the huge joke about the Limeys, originated in a satire by a Limey—comic names likewise. I suspect its influence is discernible in The Third Man.

Bruce Marshall is not the first novelist to discover what Hollywood can do to a story by way of streamlining the implications of the plot, hotting up the story or what you will. I did not see the film but my recollection of the novel is fairly clear and comparison with the synopsis prompts a number of observations, most of which strengthen your

contributor's case:

THE EMPTY SLEEVE: cliché device to convey background

originally in simple description.

Maria: not simply a Russian, but a Volksdeutsche, hence the kind of problem rarely clearly defined in international agreements. The bureaucrats of both sides are criticised in the novel, as well as the Vatican, for failing to speak clearly.

THE TRAIN: not a Russian one, but from Yugoslavia with deported Volksdeutsche; the problem at the station was not one of Russian dumping of the useless, but concerned the responsibility for reception. This was presumably simplified in the film to highlight Russian greed over Maria. Incongruous anyway for Russians to use valuable rolling stock to facilitate the exit of even the useless.

U.N.O. I can assure your contributor that this twist to the plot, with the extraordinary spectacle of a British officer penning memoranda to that body and an aeroplane routed from Vienna to London via Rome, is entirely of transatlantic invention.

PINIEV: A human being, along with Hooky and Mother Superior, subjected to the minimum of satire. betrayal of Maria is more complex, and he is certainly not in at the kill.

I hope I have made it clear that the novel is not the plain tale of St. George, the Beauty and the Beast, although there is no question where the faith of the novelist resides. whilst much of the conversation quoted is not original, that between Hooky and the Mother Superior, on the topic of flying, is. But it is surely unwise to label the Mother Superior's abiding faith in the supernatural in an age of almost miraculous material progress as "cavalier treatment of the intellectual" and hence akin to a fascist attitude. If this impression arose from the film it is directly attributable to the ill-advised attempt at including the novelist's dialogue in parts without communicating the climate in which it flourished quite naturally. For Bruce Marshall's view of the world might be described as Chaucerian in that the sublime and the ridiculous jostle each other in the compass of a conversation, provoking irony without undue incongruity. His chaotic style is adapted to the situation described—an almost

unredeemed bloody farce. 15 Cranleigh Road, Esher, Surrey.

HUGH BLAKE.

#### Corrections

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND,

SIR,—May I be allowed to correct two mishaps in my review of the post-war French cinema, for which I apologise?
(1) Giraudoux wrote the dialogue of Les Anges du Péché,

not the script, which was by Father Bruckberger, a Dominican. (2) L'Armoire Volante was Carlo Rim's picture, not Jean

Faurez's. The latter's best picture is La Vie en Rose. Carlo Rim, incidentally, is not a negligible personality.

Yours faithfully,

JEAN QUEVAL.

Hericy,

Seine-et-Marne.

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND,

SIR,-I notice in the October-December issue of SIGHT AND SOUND, on page ii, that Casque d'Or is credited to Film Traders and not to Films de France. This presumably arose because the picture was shown at the Academy for a very long time.

However, this is apt to be confusing as the general distribution of the sub-titled and dubbed versions is being handled

by British Lion on our behalf.

Yours faithfully, INGRAM FRASER, Managing Director, Films de France.

144 Piccadilly, W.1.

#### THE SOUND TRACK

At first glance there is nothing quite so English as the credit titles of an Ealing Studios comedy. The directors include Robert Hamer, Sandy MacKendrick and Charles Crichton. Mr. Stephen Dalby looks after the sound, Mr. Slocombe or Mr. Palmer are the photographers, Mr. Holt or Mr. Tanner edit, and Mr. Clarke writes the scripts. Mr. Irving, who conducts the Philharmonia Orchestra, is a Surrey man; he is 75 and knew the London Edwardian stage as one of its musical directors.

The name of Georges Auric, once a student of the Paris Conservatoire and a member of the group of 1920s musical rebels known as "Les Six" (it includes Honegger and Milhaud), comes as a Gallic shock into this essentially British team. When listening to The Lavender Hill Mob or The Titfield Thunderbolt, it is difficult to remember that this is also the composer for Le Sang d'un Poete, Entrée des Artistes, L'Eternel Retour and Orphée. Perhaps A Nous la Liberté was pointing the way, but it was not until Pascal's Caesar and Cleopatra that Auric got his first glimpse of British comedy (during the recording sessions, Mr. Pascal asked a man performing on a two-ton anvil with a 56-pound hammer to "play it with feeling"). When Shaw told him that his main theme (a Continental, "modern" motif) was "almost Handelian," Auric saw how funny English humour was and went on to do *Hue and Cry* for Ealing, followed by *Passport* to *Pimlico*. Irving and Auric were an immediate success at Ealing but a sudden economy wave caused the Music Depart-

ment to revert to non-copyright Mozart, one of Mr. Irving's favourite classical composers. Thus Kind Hearts and Coronets derived most of its material from "Don Giovanni"; later on, even Handel was to be used as the source of the main theme for His Excellency. The nature of The Lavender Hill Mob demanded a specially composed score and the Parisian motif provided by the golden Eiffel Tower models made Auric the ideal musician.

As with the "Guggle" in *The Man in the White Suit, The Titfield Thunderbolt* is dominated by sound effects rather than music. This light-weight Ealing comedy makes great use of the changes in sound quality between heavy main-line trains, the light tank engine and three coaches of the branch line, and, finally, the incisive puff-puff of the single cylinder museum piece. There are some wonderful changes during the battle between the steam-roller and the tank locomotive, whilst a gentle change of pitch in the whistle note makes a pleasant,

under-played gag. Here too is Mr. Auric, with His Tune. Sometimes it has had a schoolboy setting, sometimes a car chase theme and then again a mysterioso orchestration. The railway film starts with a sturdy train rhythm, leading smoothly into natural sound as the express appears in the opening shot. From then on, the exclusively French-speaking Mr. Auric deals happily with English pubs, country lanes, local squires and village parsons with a Continental enthusiasm for the peculiar British. If there is any lesson to be learnt, it is perhaps that comedy of the Ealing type succeeds because it is nationally international; what we call "essentially English" evokes the same reaction in London, New York and Paris because the "national" customs and trimmings are really local variations on world-established themes. In the distillation process of musical composition the Parisian in the Ealing team finds that he "fits in" after all.

JOHN HUNTLEY.

#### Cecil Hepworth

The death of Cecil Hepworth (February 10th, 1953) snapped one of the few remaining links of the modern British cinema with its pioneer past. As inventor, film-maker, impresario, producer, his career had been prolific. Hepworth entered films in 1898, having already written a book called "The ABC of the Cinematograph," and two years later he made a newsreel film of Queen Victoria's funeral, the first time that the British cinema recorded a State occasion. By that time, too, he had patented and marketed a Kinema Developing Machine which remained in use until the '20's, and was the model for subsequent processing devices. In 1904 he designed and planned the first covered film studios, at Walton-on-Thames, in 1905 he made the famous Rescued by Rover (cost, £7 13s. 9d.), and in 1910 he was experimenting with the first synchronised sound machine and had patented the "Vivaphone" method.

There grew up in the early years of this century the Hepworth stock company, at the Walton studios, for whom Ronald Colman made his first film, and of which the brightest stars were Alma Taylor, Henry Edwards, Chrissie White and Stewart Rome. The films themselves had a handsomeness and polish unrivalled by Hepworth's contemporaries. Hepworth filmed Dickens-Oliver Twist, Barnaby Rudge, David Copperfield, The Old Curiosity Shop; filmed Hamlet with Forbes Robertson, David Garrick with Sir Charles Wyndham, Pinero's Iris with Henry Ainley. More than anyone else at the time, he showed that the British cinema could be literate and could

attract famous talents.

It was the rapid rise of Hollywood in the middle 20's that ended Hepworth Picture Plays, a collapse due not only to inferior material resources but to the fact that by then Hepworth was out of sympathy with the age; there is nothing of the 20's about Comin' Thro' the Rye. As a film-maker his importance lay in his discovery of good actors and his visual sense; the Dickens films, Trelawney of the Wells, Comin' Thro' the Rye, are remarkable above all for their tasteful and realistic development of settings and their stylish photography. They are carefully made, solid, old-fashioned pictures, now overtaken by time and fashion, but of genuine historical importance. The story of the Company's collapse, the selling of the studio, the destruction of most of the negatives, is a sad and, alas, a characteristic one. Yet Hepworth himself, as his autobiography, Came the Dawn, showed, remained surprisingly unembittered. The later years of his life were devoted to making advertisement shorts and trailers, from which he retired only a year before his death, at the age of 77, remaining in harness almost to the last.

#### Herman J. Mankiewicz

Herman J. Mankiewicz, elder brother of Joseph L. Mankiewicz, died aged 55 on March 12th, 1953, having been a scriptwriter in Hollywood since 1926. Coming to films from journalism—he had been the first dramatic editor of The New Yorker—he began by writing a Lon Chaney vehicle, The Road to Mandalay. During the '30's he worked on many pictures for Paramount and M.G.M., including Dinner at Eight, but only one film was to show the full measure of his talent: Citizen Kane, for which he wrote the screenplay in collaboration with Orson Welles. His last script was Pride of St. Louis.

#### (KING VIDOR continued from Page 182)

American life. All three are concerned, in the background if not the foreground, with huge material projects: the architect's buildings, the blast furnaces (which Rosa Moline found so cruel to the nerves) in Beyond the Forest, the marsh reclamation with its sound of distant pumps ("like a heart beating," Ruby comments) in Ruby Gentry. In each of them the main character, sourly, savagely discontented with his or her position, unfairly "victimised" by society, is driven to attempt an extreme kind of revenge against that society. A great building is dynamited, an unhappy small-town wife attempts abortion and succeeds in murder, an embittered girl rulns local industrialists and floods acres of land. Both Beyond the Forest and Ruby Gentry express, crudely but with undoubted force, hostility to American social hierarchies. In both of them a poor woman loves a rich man; and the results are anguished, violent and squalid. Neither Rosa nor Ruby can persuade their wealthy lovers to marry them, and are rejected in favour of young society girls. Both, in consequence, are driven almost insane with rage. In The Fountainhead the situation is reversed: the perverse rich society girl takes up the poor struggling architect, then abandons him for a newspaper tycoon. Nobody marries for love, and the characters enjoy clandestine sexual affairs with a kind of furtive, groping hysteria—the heroine of The Fountainhead is picturesquely sadistic, the lovers of Ruby and Rosa brutal and calculating.

What, then, is one to make of these strange films of dislocated lives and societies? The extravagant plots, weirdly inflated characters, do not add up to standard American hokum. The films are, in fact, works of artof bad art; if they are dismissed as absurd, it must be admitted the absurdity has a unique grandeur. Even more interesting-what are we to make of today's King Vidor, a director who began as a talented exponent of homely American folk-lore and now devotes himself to these raw slices of frustrated life, that seem at times to express a secret, sickened disgust, with their pairs of clawing lovers bleeding to death in canyon and swamp, dynamiting a building at night, with the hideously painted Rosa Moline lurching down dead beside the train to her lover that she had wanted to catch? Does Vidor, one wonders, believe them "absolutely true to human nature," not "unclean in thought or action," fit for a wife to act in, a

daughter to see?

There would seem to be hidden here a kind of allegory of Hollywood, an illustration of one of its own massproduced myths. The young man begins with simple, honest, high intentions; he and his works are sincere and exalted; fame and money arrive. Now the coin is turned over. Fame and money do not bring happiness, they poison hope and innocence; but all their lifelong prisoner can do is to cherish secret revenges, angers and des-

peration.

All of the films, though it is especially to be remarked in Beyond the Forest and Ruby Gentry, have moments which seem old-fashioned in their manner, anachronistic sections transplanted almost intact from the silent cinema, that silent American cinema most influenced by Griffith. These are usually, significantly enough, the sentimental bits. The rest of the time, then, there is a display of the driving power of a man in his later years who approaches film-making of the wholly commercial variety with little respect, with dampened enthusiasm, but with a detached yet seething kind of eclectic virtuosity and a desire to convey, despite all restrictions, a certain attitude towards the American scene. The portrait that emerges, Vidor's America, is a land well beyond the usual Hollywood one of popular wish-fulfilment. It is, indeed, a fine grotesque of various aspects of the present social situation.

#### (STROHEIM—continued from page 171)

well as McTeague, of an understanding lover—but it is too theoretical to be at all vivid. Perhaps the absence of any mitigation in this chronicle of wretchedness suggests the Viennese aristocrat—an American director would not have refused personal concern to such a degree. If he had not excited pity for Trina and McTeague he would at least have made an angrier film. Stroheim has scrutinised their lives with a merciless, unflinching eye, but there is no ambivalence in his approach, as there is with *The Wedding March*. Yet, though in a sense this limits the achievement, one cannot altogether reproach him for it. A more personal involvement would probably have lost the singleness of purpose, which needed an unyielding ruthlessness to carry it through and make it the piece of sustained, grim realistic analysis that was to create such a lasting impact on the American cinema.

To assess what Stroheim (and the American cinema) learned from Griffith, one needs to go back several years beyond The Birth of a Nation, to a marvellous two-reeler that he made in 1908 called A Corner in Wheat. With this film, probably, the "modern" American cinema was born. The subject might have been something from Frank Norris' sketchbook: a simple story about unscrupulous Californian businessmen and the hardships their methods caused to poor people. The luxurious life of a man who has a corner in wheat, and the queues of starving poor people lining up for bread, which suddenly increases in price, are contrasted with a sharp bitterness. The capitalist dealer comes to an appropriate end, falling into a huge vat of flour at his own factory while showing a party of friends round, and vanishing as if in quicksands. In this historic vignette Griffith stated some basic social issues, depicted poor people in their own surroundings with directness and sympathy, satirised and condemned big business. Four years later, in *The Musketeers of Pig Alley*, a film of similar dimensions, he did another astonishing thing; this melodrama set in a city slum portrayed crime as the inevitable outcome of poverty, and described, against an authentic background of street corners, tenements and alleys, the growth of a hold-up gang.

It is all too easy to call Griffith a Victorian on the evidence of certain undeniably Victorian elements in his work, and dismiss his social ideas as outdated or confused. The fact remains that the ideas of A Corner in Wheat and The Musketeers of Pig Alley were taken up by, and are still embodied in, most "advanced" social documents produced by the American cinema. The Birth of a Nation, certainly, is disfigured by its attitude towards the negro race, and Griffith as philosopher in Intolerance is hardly to be taken seriously; and yet, as an observer of existing reality, he could be brave and acute. There is a case, I believe, to be made that his large-scale films are more historically important—in their development of many of the cinema's most vital narrative resources—than artistically satisfactory, and that his best works, as works of art, are the smaller, more intimate ones—these two early sketches, Broken Blossoms, Isn't Life Wonderful, One Exciting Night. At any rate, one can trace the

influence of A Corner in Wheat through the uncompromising actuality of Greed to the poetic style of The Grapes of Wrath, just as The Musketeers of Pig Alley is the ancestor of the 30's gangster films, and remains even as contemporary as, say,

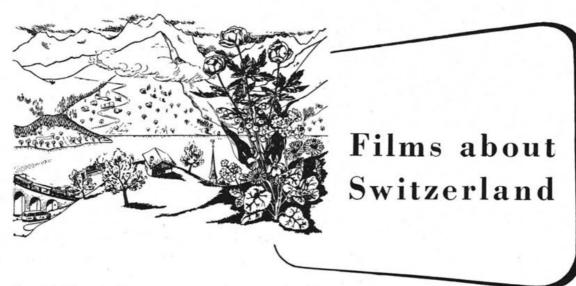
The Asphalt Jungle.

From Griffith, in fact, the two main lines of American cinema start and diverge; and at the head of the first opposing lines of descent are Chaplin and Stroheim. Differently placed as they are, one is also struck by what they have in common similarities, incidentally, that have caused all of them to be labelled Victorian. All are, undisguisedly, moralists; Chaplin as well as Griffith and Stroheim is an exile; all work on a solid 19th century scale, carpentering their plots, contriving their episodes, not much concerned with the plausibilities of coincidence but intent on depicting human beings in conflict with social injustice; all are fond of young, innocent, tender and ill-treated heroines from poor families; and all have studied, painstakingly, the face of poverty. Where they diverge is in their declaration of sympathies, for while Griffith and Chaplin appeal to common humanity, Stroheim does not. He approaches it in the love scenes of The Wedding March and Queen Kelly, but the final tone even of these films remains misanthropic. There are similarities between Chaplin's London and the London of Broken Blossoms, but none between the beautiful poverty of Charlie and the squalor of the McTeagues. Nothing in Stroheim is ever transfigured. The McTeagues. only parallel is Chaplin's most bitter film; one can imagine Stroheim having made a Monsieur Verdoux.

After Griffith's first disclosures, then, the two main lines of approach to the American scene become clear. The direct one runs through Chaplin, to the early Vidor, to Ford; between Broken Blossoms, The Gold Rush, Hallelujah! The Grapes of Wrath, there are evident affinities—a lyrical approach to simple and ordinary people, an affirmation of human dignity and love. The line from Stroheim contains no such reassurances. The violent satire of Foolish Wives leads through to Lubitsch's elegant and cynical comedies, finds a more recent echo in the ruthless upper class intrigues of Sturges' The Lady Eve and The Palm Beach Story, in the bizarre passions of Wilder's Sunset Boulevard. The cruel declining aristocracies of The Wedding March are transferred to America at the turn of the century in Welles' The Magnificent Ambersons, in Wyler's The Little Foxes and Carrie; and the unaffectionate surface texture of American life in Greed in the numerous crime and gangster films of the last twenty years, in Lang's Fury, in Huston's Treasure of the Sierra Madre, in Citizen Kane. All these, like Stroheim's, are films of "exposure," with an eloquent mistrust of society and of human motives.

In creating this antithesis in the American cinema, Stroheim also rejected some powerful elements: the American "dream," folklore, much that was ingrained and indigenous, homely and comfortable. Only a foreigner could have achieved it. From this point of view Stroheim's work epitomises that crossfertilisation with other cultures which so much American art in this century has undergone. As in the 1900's the literary tradition had been divided between those who went to Europe and those who stayed at home, so twenty years later a parallel occurred in the cinema—only, this time, Europe came to America, and, like the novelists who had emigrated, Stroheim in Hollywood evoked the magnificence and treachery of European civilisation, the raw materialism of the new world.

So it happens that the triumvirate of the American cinema one American, and beside Griffith comprises only Southerner are Chaplin the Englishman and Stroheim the One cannot imagine an immigrant artist being allowed to create a comparable upheaval in Hollywood today; it seems, even, inevitable that after a few years Stroheim should have been rejected, that he should have returned to Europe and planned a last episode to his comedie humaine, in which once again the customs, the great and solid structures, the temperatures and preoccupations of an obsolescent society would emerge like a city rising from the sea. For he didn't really belong to America, any more than other artists who had left it; his past was not the American past, and he was altogether too stern with the present. Yet for a time he annexed it, and the occupation marks have remained. So it usually is with those who make revolutions. They seize power and are as suddenly deprived of it, but when they have gone, many things are different, and a part of them still remains.



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